Open AI Oakland's Seat at the Table

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Published by **CDMBOOKS** Oakland, California

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ISBN: (to be inserted) Cover & Interior: CDMBOOKS Printed in the United States of America

First Edition: 2026

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Win or lose I am and shall maintain as a huge fan of Elon Musk. I came to Oakland as a 22-year-old woman searching for my place in the world. I am writing this book at 71, riding slowly down the same streets I once sprinted across, seeing a city that has changed as much as I have. This morning, as I drove down Telegraph toward the Walgreens near the courthouse, I saw my own mortality reflected in the boarded windows, the shuttered businesses, and the empty sidewalks. Many of my friends are gone now. Many of the places that shaped my life have disappeared. Oakland has grown quieter, lonelier, and more fragile than the city that raised me.

This book was born from that drive — from the realization that the end of my writing career coincides with a turning point in Oakland's history. As the world debates the future of artificial intelligence, this city is fighting for its own future. And yet, for a brief moment, Oakland became the center of a global conversation. The Musk v. OpenAI trial brought cameras, reporters, and the world's wealthiest men to a courthouse that now sits in silence.

I wrote this book to capture that moment — not just the trial, but the city that held it. The Oakland I have known for nearly fifty years. The Oakland that shaped me. The Oakland that is passing into the hands

of a new generation.

If this book is a gift, it is a gift to them — to every new soul who enters this city, hoping to understand what it was, what it is, and what it might still become.

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OPEN AI

Oakland's Seat at the Table

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Carol D. Mitchell

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Opening

Readers Briefing

READER'S BRIEFING: Understanding AI Before We Enter the Courtroom

It's the case — *Elon Musk vs. Sam Altman* — that could force OpenAI to restructure, disrupt its planned late-2026 IPO, and potentially redefine how artificial intelligence is governed in the United States. Musk is seeking to dismantle what he calls the organization's "for-profit drift." But before we launch into what many have already labeled the Trial of the Century, there are a few things the reader must understand.

Many people will naturally ask: *What exactly is AI? Who — or what — is ChatGPT? Why does this case matter to the public, and why is it unfolding in Oakland?* Before we step into the prologue and the opening matters of this case, it is essential to understand these terms as they relate to you, the public, and the courtroom you're about to enter.

Artificial Intelligence is often described in mystical or sensational language, but there is nothing mystical about it. AI is not a mind, a conscience, or a hidden agenda. It is a statistical system trained to recognize patterns in enormous amounts of data and generate responses that match those patterns. It predicts, it imitates, it organizes — but it

does not "think" in the human sense. This distinction matters, because the future of this technology is being debated in a courtroom where precision, not mythology, determines the stakes.

ChatGPT, the system many people encounter first when they think of AI, is a language model created by OpenAI. It generates text, explanations, and reasoning based on patterns it has learned. It is not a sentient being, nor is it capable of lying with intent. When it makes mistakes, those errors come from prediction, not deception. The system is only as accurate as the data it was trained on and the clarity of the instructions it receives. For many professionals — including myself as a courtroom reporter — it has become a tool that supports research, organization, and clarity, even while acknowledging its imperfections.

But to understand this trial, the reader must understand something deeper: AI is no longer a futuristic concept. It is a present-day force shaping law, economics, national security, education, medicine, and the daily lives of millions. The courtroom is not debating a gadget. It is debating the governance of a technology that will influence how societies function for generations.

The case between Elon Musk and OpenAI's leadership, including Sam Altman, is not a celebrity feud. It is a conflict about the governance of intelligence itself. At the heart of the dispute is a question that will shape the next century: *Who controls the direction of powerful AI systems, and under what mission?* Musk argues that OpenAI abandoned its nonprofit roots. OpenAI argues that the mission evolved to meet the realities of building advanced technology. The courtroom becomes the

place where these competing visions are tested — not just for the parties involved, but for the public that will live with the consequences.

This trial also unfolds at a time when misinformation about AI spreads easily. Online personalities, including those who build followings by "tricking" AI systems, often present these tools as deceptive or dangerous. Their content is designed for virality, not accuracy. My experience has been different. I have found AI to be useful, fair, and transparent about its limitations. It has supported my professional work, not replaced it. But the public conversation around AI is shaped as much by spectacle as by fact, which is why clarity is necessary before the reader enters the legal proceedings.

And there is another layer — one that is rarely acknowledged in national coverage: the location of this trial matters. Oakland is not a backdrop. It is a character in this story.

This city, with its history of activism, innovation, and cultural leadership, is hosting a trial that will influence the global trajectory of artificial intelligence. While Silicon Valley built the technology, Oakland is now holding it accountable. That alone is historic.

The courtroom testimony that follows assumes an understanding of what AI is, what it is not, and why the stakes of this case extend far beyond the individuals involved. With that grounding, the reader can follow the arguments, the evidence, and the implications with confidence — and without confusion.

This briefing is not meant to persuade the reader to trust or distrust AI. It is meant to provide a foundation — a clear, steady place

to stand before the courtroom doors open and the record begins. What happens inside those walls will not only determine the future **of OpenAI, but will also shape how the public understands the promises and perils of artificial intelligence itself.**

OPENAI

The Timeline

From the beginning, Elon Musk's relationship with OpenAI was marked by both ambition and uncertainty. He helped build the organization, funded it heavily — contributing **approximately $38–44 million in the early years** — and believed in its original nonprofit mission. Yet even in those early years, he wrestled with doubts about whether the project was drifting away from the principles he thought he had secured. Musk was not impulsive in his concerns. For a long time, those questions remained private, unspoken outside the small circle of founders who understood the stakes.

He did not immediately move toward litigation, nor did he appear certain that a lawsuit was the right path. Instead, he watched the organization evolve, waited for clarity, and weighed whether the shift toward commercialization represented a breach of the founding promise or simply the natural progression of a rapidly advancing field. Musk's hesitation is important — it shows that this lawsuit was not born from a single disagreement, but from nearly a decade of tension, philosophical divergence, and competing visions for the future of artificial intelligence.

It was only after years of structural changes, public disagreements, and the explosive rise of OpenAI's commercial products that Musk reached a definitive conclusion. By 2024, he determined that the divergence between the original nonprofit vision and the company's new direction was no longer a matter of interpretation but a matter for the courts. What followed was a legal battle that expanded in scope, drew in major industry figures, and ultimately led to the federal trial documented throughout this book.

The timeline that follows traces this evolution from inception to courtroom, showing how a shared mission unraveled into one of the most consequential technology lawsuits of the decade. It is not simply a chronology — it is the story of how a philosophical disagreement became a legal confrontation, and how a nonprofit research lab became the center of a global debate about the governance of intelligence.

In **2015**, Elon Musk, Sam Altman, and Greg Brockman founded OpenAI as a nonprofit dedicated to developing artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity. Musk contributed between **$38 million and $44 million** to ensure the work remained open, safe, and not driven by private profit. The founding documents, public statements, and early communications all emphasized a mission rooted in transparency and public benefit.

Between **2015 and 2018**, the founders operated under this nonprofit vision. But internal tensions grew. Musk wanted to lead the organization; others resisted consolidating that much power under one individual. In **2018**, Musk resigned from the board after his proposal to

merge OpenAI with Tesla — and assume personal control as CEO — was rejected. His departure marked a turning point. With Musk gone, the remaining leadership began exploring structures that could support the enormous computational and financial demands of modern AI research.

From **2019 to 2023**, OpenAI moved away from its original nonprofit structure and began operating with a commercial arm. In **2019**, under Sam Altman's direction, the organization created a "capped-profit" division designed to attract the massive funding needed to scale its research, including multi-billion-dollar investments from Microsoft. This hybrid structure — nonprofit oversight with for-profit operations — was controversial from the start.

By **2022 and 2023**, the launch of ChatGPT pushed OpenAI into global prominence and reshaped the tech landscape. The company became synonymous with the AI revolution. During this period, Musk became increasingly critical, arguing that OpenAI had shifted into a closed-source operation that functioned more like a Microsoft-aligned enterprise than the open nonprofit he helped create. His public statements grew sharper, and his private concerns hardened into a belief that the organization had abandoned its founding mission.

In **early 2024**, Musk filed his first lawsuit against OpenAI, briefly withdrew it, and re-filed it in **August 2024** in federal court in California. From late 2024 into 2025, he expanded the case to include antitrust allegations against Microsoft and investor Reid Hoffman. OpenAI countered with its own suit, asserting that Musk was weaponizing the courts to damage a competitor and benefit his own AI company, xAI.

What began as a dispute over mission drift had now become a multi-front legal war involving some of the most powerful figures in technology.

On **April 27–28, 2026**, a jury of nine was selected in Oakland under U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, officially beginning the federal civil trial. On **April 28, 2026**, the trial opened to the public. In late April, Musk testified for three days, arguing that OpenAI had executed a "bait and switch" by converting nonprofit research into a commercial enterprise. During early May 2026, cross-examination forced Musk to acknowledge that no written contract ever required OpenAI to remain a permanent nonprofit — a moment that would become a central point of contention.

On **May 11, 2026**, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella testified, defending Microsoft's investments and ridiculing OpenAI's 2023 boardroom crisis as "amateur city." On **May 12, 2026**, Sam Altman testified that Musk abandoned the team in 2018 after failing to obtain 90 percent ownership and personal control. On **May 13, 2026**, testimony concluded with OpenAI revealing that Musk's rival company, xAI, had used OpenAI's proprietary data to train its own models — a revelation that electrified the courtroom.

On **May 14, 2026**, both sides delivered closing arguments. Musk's attorneys argued that they had proven OpenAI defrauded its original donor. OpenAI's lawyers countered that the lawsuit was a meritless competitive attack designed to benefit xAI. The case is now in the hands of the nine-person jury, which is deliberating on the narrow claims of **breach of charitable trust** and **unjust enrichment**.

This timeline is more than a sequence of events — it is the backbone of a conflict that will influence how artificial intelligence is governed for decades. The courtroom in Oakland is not merely resolving a dispute between two men; it is determining the future of a technology that will shape the world.

PROLOGUE

Opening Statement

As artificial intelligence sat on the edge of this court's decision, there was one truth no one could deny: no longer would a single man control her most awaited destiny. When this verdict enters the record, the world we knew today becomes yesterday. I sat on the green lawn of this gigantic courthouse, watching people who would never have a reason to return here again. And when I started up my wheelchair and turned away from the building, I knew I would never be back here again either. The moment had passed. The era had ended. Oakland had done her part, and now it was time to pass her future to the next generation.

The assertion that Black Oakland should not be excluded is underscored by the extensive implications of the trial. A jury composed of Oakland residents is currently deliberating whether the 'original promise' of AI for humanity has been violated. Should the community reject the 'Musk story' due to personal aversion, they may overlook the pivotal moment when the future of AI governance is being determined in their own locality. Nevertheless, the essence of the lawsuit revolves around a conflict regarding corporate governance and foundational agreements,

specifically questioning whether Sam Altman, Co-founder of OpenAI has failed to uphold its commitment to remain a non-profit entity. The case primarily represents a struggle over who will wield control over the 'soul' and the vast resources of OpenAI. Oakland's Genuine Concern: The Community Focus Many Black technologists and civil rights organizations, such as the NAACP, are primarily focused on the immediate detrimental effects of AI. This encompasses the establishment of 'dirty data centers' in vulnerable communities, algorithmic discrimination in employment and law enforcement, and the inherent 'antiblackness' present in large language models. For many, a shift in OpenAI's tax designation appears trivial compared to issues that can alter lives.

Reasons for the Lack of Black Engagement in This Case: Neither Elon Musk nor Sam Altman is generally regarded as advocates for Black interests within the technology sector. Elon Musk: His management of X has faced significant criticism from civil rights organizations for permitting an increase in hate speech and for undermining DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives. Sam Altman: Although OpenAI has made strides towards safety, Black AI ethicists have consistently highlighted that OpenAI's models continue to exhibit racial bias and that the company's mission of "benefit for humanity" has historically been devoid of diverse representation in its leadership. Therefore, understanding the reasons behind the Black community's limited visibility in relation to this case leads us to conclude that when two prominent figures with complex racial histories are in

conflict, there is often minimal motivation for the community to "choose a side." The lack of Black participation may indeed signify a shift in focus towards more tangible goals: ensuring that as artificial intelligence evolves, it does not marginalize the Black community or, even more concerning, leave it behind.

What Oakland Should Be Doing: "Claiming the City" If civil rights leaders and organizations such as the NAACP were to heed my counsel, they would fully seize the opportunity presented by this trial, adopting an "Oakland Perspective" that could foster positivity for the city. We could utilize this trial as the "Moral Ground"; while San Francisco is recognized as the hub of venture capital, Oakland has historically been the bastion of justice and community activism. By making their presence known at the courthouse, these organizations could position Oakland as the venue where AI is held accountable. This would transform the city's reputation from one of negativity to a place where the world's most influential individuals must respond to the law; and I'd hate to look back on this time in U.S. history and see it summed up as a missed opportunity for Oakland, California. Emphasizing the city during a high-profile international trial could draw in conscious-tech investments. This is the ideal location, and it would motivate startups and authors to select Oakland over the high-rent turmoil of San Francisco, particularly due to its distinctive cultural foundation. Oakland is currently in the global spotlight. It can become synonymous with resolving the most significant conflicts of the AI era and finally stop playing second fiddle to San Francisco if it can extricate itself from its current

predicament and establish itself as the capital of AI ethics and legal standards. We must take ownership of the stage. This could serve as the impetus for fostering a brighter future for Oakland, California, and we cannot afford to let this opportunity slip away into the frigid bay. Let us advance. This is our domain, and we are in control. This transformation from stagnation will finally provide us with the advantage. At a deeper level, this moment offers Oakland something it has rarely been granted: the chance to define itself on its own terms. For decades, the city has been spoken about, analyzed, and judged by outsiders who never understood its cultural intelligence or its political sophistication. This trial reverses that dynamic. It places Oakland at the center of a national conversation about technology, ethics, and power. If our institutions step forward—if our leaders stand visibly in the halls of justice—they can demonstrate that Oakland is not merely a backdrop to Silicon Valley's decisions but an active participant shaping the moral boundaries of the In the AI age, presence is power. Oakland's voice in this moment is not symbolic; it is essential. For decades, decisions about technology were made in distant boardrooms and Silicon Valley enclaves, far from the communities most affected by their consequences. But this trial forced the world to look east across the Bay, to a city that has always understood struggle, reinvention, and the cost of being overlooked. By standing here — in this courthouse, in this era — Oakland signals that the future of artificial intelligence will not be shaped solely by billionaires, engineers, or corporate boards.

Chapter One

The Split that Changed AI

The center of the dispute is Elon Musk's claim that OpenAI's founders abandoned the organization's original nonprofit mission. Musk seeks to remove Sam Altman from the OpenAI Board and dismantle the for-profit structure now overseeing ChatGPT. From Musk's perspective, Altman took the nonprofit vision away from him — a vision Musk believed he helped establish in 2015, when Altman first proposed forming a Delaware nonprofit dedicated to developing artificial general intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

Control was the early fault line. Musk wanted to lead the operation; Altman and the other founders as follows who did not want him to have full authority. **Greg Brockman:** Co-founder and president of OpenAI, **Ilya Sutskever:** Co-founder and former chief scientist, and Other original co-founders mentioned in the context of this period included **Wojciech Zaremba** and **John Schulman**. After years of internal tension, Musk walked away — and with him went the substantial funding he had been providing. His departure marked a turning point. It was then that Altman began steering the nonprofit concept toward a structure capable of raising large-scale capital.

By 2019, Altman secured a $1 billion investment from Microsoft, by restructuring Open AI and leveraging the lab's needs for computing power to align with Microsoft's strategic goals. The billion dollars was not a single cash payment; it was a capital commitment involving both cash and significant Azure Cloud credits. Provided over several years. That partnership accelerated the development of the online chatbot now known worldwide as **ChatGPT**. It opened the door to what many describe as a new "online birth of a nation" — a high-velocity expansion of AI power involving not only OpenAI and Google, but a growing constellation of companies across the global tech orbit.

On July 12, 2023, Musk launched **xAI**, and allegedly admitted that is uses Open AI models to train its' own. In this trial, Altman's team frames Musk's lawsuit as a case of "sour grapes," arguing that no one could have predicted how rapidly AI would scale. Today, OpenAI is valued at approximately **$730 billion**, and the company is reportedly preparing for a public offering — possibly as soon as this year and then, there's more.

What is Anthropic

Anthropic's name appears throughout the trial—not as a litigant, but as a benchmark, a rival, and a point of comparison that helps contextualize OpenAI's decisions, its market position, and the stakes of the case.

Anthropic is an artificial intelligence safety and research company based in San Francisco, founded by former executives of **OpenAI**. It is best known for developing **Claude**, a large language model

and chatbot that competes directly with OpenAI's ChatGPT.

While Anthropic is not a direct party in the specific lawsuit making headlines in Oakland right now, its history and business model are deeply connected to the core arguments of that case.

The Oakland Case: Musk vs. OpenAI

The trial currently taking place at the federal courthouse in **Oakland** (the Northern District of California) is **Elon Musk's lawsuit against OpenAI** and its CEO, **Sam Altman**.

The case focuses on several key allegations:

"Stolen Charity": Musk argues that OpenAI's founders abandoned their original nonprofit mission (to build AI for the benefit of humanity) to create a for-profit juggernaut enriched by billions from Microsoft.

Breach of Trust: Musk claims he was misled into donating millions under the guise of a nonprofit mission that he believes has since been "jettisoned."

The Stakes: Musk is seeking to have OpenAI "disgorge" profits (potentially up to $150 billion) and is even pushing for the removal of Altman and Greg Brockman from leadership.

What does Anthropic have to do with this?

Anthropic represents the "other path" in the story of OpenAI's evolution and was founded in 2021 by **Dario and Daniela Amodei** and several other researchers who left OpenAI. They left specifically because of disagreements over the company's direction—particularly regarding its increasingly close ties with Microsoft and concerns that OpenAI was

prioritizing commercial speed over safety.

The "Safety" Argument: Musk's lawyers will often point to are the exodus of researchers (who formed companies like Anthropic) as evidence that OpenAI's original culture and safety-first mission were compromised.

Alternative Structure: Unlike OpenAI's complex "nonprofit-controlled for-profit" structure, Anthropic was established as a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC). This model is frequently discussed in legal circles as a potential alternative to the structure Musk is currently challenging in court. A PBC is designed to balance profit with a legally defined public mission, which means its leadership must consider the broader societal impact of its decisions, not just shareholder value. In the context of this trial, Anthropic's structure has become a quiet but powerful contrast point. It represents the kind of governance model some experts argue OpenAI should have adopted if it wanted to scale responsibly without abandoning its original nonprofit ethos. The PBC framework also shields Anthropic from some of the criticisms now being leveled at OpenAI, because its mission is embedded in its legal DNA rather than dependent on the goodwill of its executives.

Market Competition: OpenAI's legal team has argued that Musk's lawsuit isn't about "saving humanity," but is instead a move to damage a competitor while he builds his own AI company, xAI, which is also facing its own legal scrutiny in Oakland regarding data practices and safety concerns. In their telling, Musk's departure from OpenAI was not a moral stand but a strategic retreat, followed by the creation of a

rival enterprise now racing to catch up. This framing positions Musk not as a betrayed founder but as a market actor attempting to slow down a competitor's momentum through litigation. The courtroom arguments suggest that the explosive growth of OpenAI, combined with Microsoft's backing, created an ecosystem Musk could no longer influence — and that the lawsuit is an attempt to reinsert himself into the narrative of AI leadership.

The presence of Anthropic complicates this picture even further. Its founders, many of whom left OpenAI over disagreements about safety and commercialization, represent a third path in the AI landscape — one that neither Musk nor Altman fully controls. In the courtroom, Anthropic's existence is used to illustrate that the AI field is no longer a two-player rivalry but a rapidly expanding arena where governance models, safety philosophies, and corporate structures are being tested in real time. The fact that Anthropic has secured billions in investment from companies like Amazon and Google only reinforces that the stakes extend far beyond the Musk-Altman conflict. It shows that the future of AI will not be determined by a single company or a single lawsuit, but by a broader competition over who can build powerful systems while maintaining public trust.

Anthropic's rise also highlights a deeper tension within the AI industry: the question of who should hold power over systems capable of reshaping economies, labor markets, and global communication. While OpenAI evolved into a hybrid structure that blends nonprofit oversight with for-profit incentives, Anthropic's founders deliberately

chose a governance model that signals caution rather than acceleration. Their Public Benefit Corporation status requires them to weigh societal impact alongside commercial success, a legal obligation that resonates strongly in discussions about AI safety. In the courtroom, this distinction has become a subtle but persistent theme. It suggests that OpenAI's transformation was not the only path available, and that alternative structures existed—structures that might have preserved the original mission Musk now claims was betrayed.

This contrast has not gone unnoticed by legal scholars observing the Oakland trial. Some argue that Anthropic's model demonstrates how a company can pursue cutting-edge research without abandoning its public-interest commitments. Others point out that the PBC framework could have prevented the very conflict now unfolding between Musk and Altman, because it embeds accountability into the corporate charter rather than relying on personal trust between founders. In this sense, Anthropic's existence serves as a quiet rebuke to the narrative that OpenAI had no choice but to adopt a for-profit arm to survive. It shows that the industry is not monolithic, and that governance choices shape not only corporate behavior but public perception.

Meanwhile, the competitive landscape continues to intensify. With xAI entering the arena, Musk is no longer a distant critic but an active participant in the race to build the most powerful AI systems. This complicates his legal arguments, because it positions him as both a plaintiff and a competitor. OpenAI's attorneys have leaned heavily on this point, suggesting that Musk's lawsuit is less about principle and more

about positioning. They argue that the rapid ascent of ChatGPT, combined with Microsoft's deep financial and infrastructural support, created a market environment Musk could not easily influence from the outside. Filing suit, they contend, is his attempt to reassert relevance in a field he once helped shape.

Anthropic's presence in this narrative underscores that the future of AI will not be determined by a single company or a single philosophy. Instead, it will be shaped by a constellation of actors—each with its own governance model, safety priorities, and commercial ambitions. In the Oakland courtroom, this broader context matters It reminds the jury, the public, and the industry that the Musk vs. OpenAI dispute is not just a personal conflict but a reflection of deeper questions about how AI should be built, who should control it, and what obligations these companies owe to society.

In many ways, the case has become a mirror held up to an entire era — an era in which artificial intelligence is advancing faster than the laws, institutions, and ethical frameworks designed to govern it. The testimony revealed not only the ambitions of two powerful founders, but the structural tensions inside the AI ecosystem itself: the clash between nonprofit ideals and commercial realities, the pressure to scale at any cost, and the fear that a handful of private actors may soon wield unprecedented influence over global technology. What unfolded in the Oakland federal courthouse was not merely a dispute over contracts or corporate governance; it was a public reckoning with the question of whether the future of intelligence — human or artificial — can remain

accountable to the people it is meant to serve.

The trial also forced the public to confront the uncomfortable truth that AI is no longer a distant concept or a laboratory experiment. It is a force shaping economies, elections, education, labor, and national security. The outcome of this case will ripple far beyond Silicon Valley boardrooms. It will influence how governments regulate emerging technologies, how investors value AI companies, how communities prepare for automation, and how ordinary people understand their place in a world increasingly shaped by algorithms. In this sense, the verdict is not simply a legal decision — it is a cultural moment, a signal to the world about what kind of future we are willing to accept and what kind of accountability we demand from those building it. In this sense, the verdict is not simply a legal decision — it is a cultural moment, a signal to the world about what kind of future we are willing to accept and what kind of accountability we demand from those building it. It forces a reckoning with the narratives that have shaped Silicon Valley for decades — the myth of inevitability, the presumption of benevolence, the idea that innovation should outrun oversight. For the first time in a long time, the country is being asked to consider whether technological power should remain in the hands of a few, or whether the public has a rightful claim to the direction of the tools that will define their lives.

To understand the stakes of this trial, one must understand the mythology surrounding Elon Musk: the architect of audacious dreams, the disruptor who built empires by refusing to accept limits, the technologist who has spent years positioning himself as both visionary

and necessary. Musk's 101 is not a lesson in biography; it is a lesson in influence. His presence in this case is not incidental. It is the gravitational force that shapes the narrative, the reason this trial feels less like a dispute over contracts and more like a referendum on the culture of power he helped create.

Before the jury ever heard a word of testimony, Musk's shadow was already in the room — his history, his contradictions, his triumphs, his fractures. You must first understand the man who made the world believe that the future belonged to those bold enough to seize it.

Chapter Two

Law 101

Elon Musk's testimony dominated the first week of the trial, spanning April 28 through April 30. His time on the stand provided the jury with a detailed account of his involvement in OpenAI's founding, his interpretation of the organization's mission, and his view of how that mission was later compromised. The courtroom remained full throughout his testimony, with observers and reporters tracking each exchange closely.

Musk began by describing his early contributions to OpenAI, including approximately $38 million in seed funding. He testified that he provided this support based on the understanding that the organization would remain a nonprofit dedicated to developing artificial general intelligence for the benefit of humanity. He characterized himself as a "fool" for believing the nonprofit promise — a line that quickly became one of the most widely quoted moments of the week.

A significant portion of Musk's testimony focused on a 2015 dinner with Google co-founder Larry Page. Musk recounted that Page called him a "specist" for expressing concerns about the potential risks of AGI. According to Musk, this exchange was a catalyst for founding OpenAI as a counterbalance to Google's rapid advancement in artificial

intelligence. His legal team used this anecdote to frame OpenAI's creation as a public-minded response to concentrated corporate power. Then there was a letter from Sam Altman to Elon Musk dated 5/25/2015 at 9:10 PM. In the letter Sam alluded to starting a Manhattan Project for AI; via some sort of nonprofit.

Cross-examination by OpenAI's lead attorney, William Savitt, shifted the tone. Savitt introduced 2017 emails in which Musk discussed potential for-profit structures for OpenAI, challenging the idea that Musk had always opposed such a transition. The questioning grew tense as Savitt pressed Musk on the specifics of these discussions. At one point, Musk acknowledged that he was "not sure what a safety card is," despite the lawsuit's emphasis on AI safety protocols. The exchange highlighted the complexity of the internal debates that shaped OpenAI's early years.

On April 30, the final day of Musk's testimony, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers rebuked him for attempting to argue legal points from the witness stand. Musk responded with a remark that drew brief laughter from the gallery: "I am not a lawyer… well, technically I did take Law 101 in school." The moment underscored the unusual nature of the trial — one of the world's most prominent technologists navigating the formal constraints of federal court.

Another notable revelation came when Musk's legal team confirmed that he had texted Greg Brockman, Brockman is the **President of OpenAI**, two days before the trial to discuss a potential settlement. Brockman declined the overture. The disclosure added a layer of complexity to the narrative, suggesting that both sides had explored

alternatives to litigation even as the case moved toward trial.

Throughout Musk's testimony, the legal teams returned repeatedly to the central question of the case: whether the 2015 founding documents and email exchanges constituted a binding agreement that OpenAI later breached. Musk maintained that the organization's shift toward a for-profit structure and its partnership with Microsoft violated the original mission. OpenAI's attorneys argued that the evolution was both necessary and consistent with internal discussions dating back to 2017. What emerged was a clash between two competing narratives: Musk's insistence that OpenAI had strayed from its foundational promise, and OpenAI's assertion that the organization had simply adapted to the realities of building frontier-level AI systems in a rapidly accelerating technological landscape.

From the reporter's vantage point, Musk's testimony revealed the competing interpretations of OpenAI's origins. The courtroom exchanges highlighted the tension between idealism and pragmatism — between the vision of a public-benefit research lab and the realities of developing advanced AI systems that require billions in capital and unprecedented computational resources. Musk's portrayal of himself as a guardian of the original mission stood in contrast to OpenAI's depiction of him as a founder who withdrew when he could not secure full control. The testimony also underscored the personal and philosophical divisions among the founders, divisions that now form the basis of a federal lawsuit. These were not merely disagreements about structure; they were disagreements about the very soul of the

organization and the future of artificial intelligence.

As Musk stepped down from the stand, the trial shifted toward the testimony of other key figures, including Greg Brockman and Shivon Zilis. Their accounts would further illuminate the internal dynamics of OpenAI and the decisions that led to the organization's transformation. Brockman, with his operational insight, and Zilis, with her perspective on governance and safety, were expected to provide a more granular view of the years following Musk's departure — years marked by rapid growth, strategic pivots, and escalating pressure from competitors. But Musk's three days on the stand established the emotional and ideological framework for the case: a dispute over promises made, promises interpreted, and promises contested in a courtroom far from the Silicon Valley boardrooms where they were first conceived. His testimony set the tone, framing the trial not only as a legal battle but as a reckoning over the origins of modern AI and the divergent paths taken by those who helped create it. In the gallery, you could feel a shift as Musk stepped down — not a release of tension, but a recalibration. Reporters straightened in their seats, attorneys shuffled papers with new urgency, and even the jurors seemed to recognize that the trial had crossed an invisible threshold. Musk's testimony had not merely recounted history; it had reframed it. He had placed the founding of OpenAI under a moral spotlight, inviting the court to consider whether the organization's evolution represented innovation or betrayal. That framing lingered in the air long after he exited the courtroom, leaving everyone present to reckon with the weight of what had just unfolded.

Outside the courthouse, conversations among the press corps took on a sharper edge. Analysts debated the implications of Musk's narrative, legal commentators parsed his contradictions, and tech reporters whispered about what his testimony might mean for the broader AI landscape. The trial was no longer just a dispute between a billionaire and a research lab — it had become a referendum on the soul of artificial intelligence itself, on who gets to steer its future and under what obligations. With the first act of the trial complete, the story was now expanding beyond the courtroom walls, drawing in the public, the media, and the global tech community. And with that momentum building, now let's go meet the press.

Chapter Three

Meet the Press

On April 30, 2026 — the same day Musk completed his testimony — I stood in the federal courtyard among reporters and photographers already tracking the movements of his legal team. It was the third day of the trial, and I arrived intent on observing the crowds, the onlookers, the local natives, and the press corps. Super-telephoto rigs — long, black-barreled 400–600mm lenses mounted on professional bodies — were angled upward from the courtyard toward the third-floor windows.

Let's talk about this incredible monument: **The Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building**. Completed in 1994, it anchors the Oakland City Center and rises as a prominent 18-story postmodern complex defined by its two identical towers capped with pyramid-shaped roofs. Designed by the firm Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz, the structure features a 75-foot glazed rotunda at ground level and an elevated skybridge linking the towers at the 13th and 14th floors.

Originally known simply as the Oakland Federal Building, Congress renamed it in 1998 to honor Ronald V. Dellums — the longtime Congressman and future Oakland mayor. Today, the

million-square-foot facility houses the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California along with a range of regional federal agency offices, standing as both a civic landmark and a testament to Oakland's ongoing redevelopment.

On with the story, from those lenses, photographers captured attorneys as they stepped out of conference rooms, their movements recorded from hundreds of feet away with the same precision used in high-stakes political coverage. One reporter — slim, gold-rimmed glasses, dressed like a Soul Train extra who missed his call time — glanced over and asked, "Are you recording me?"

"Yes," I said. In less than an hour, that video would be uploaded to my TikTok account.

He leaned in a beat later and added, "Musk left two hours ago." I snapped my fingers like I had missed something, while the information moved the way it always does in on-the-ground reporting: fast, unfiltered, and exchanged between people who are physically present. The same scene, along with another I shot later, is on my TikTok page now — real footage, recorded in real time, nothing staged. History was already in motion before the public realized it.

Moments later, the same reporter shouted, "There's Musk's attorney. He's holding notes in his hands." Stunned, I watched him scan the green courtyard grass all the way up to the courthouse's glass windows. Then he tossed back his super-telephoto press camera — a long black 400–600mm lens — and began reading what was on Musk's attorney's paperwork through the third-floor window.

He read the lawyer's notes in full view of everyone in the courtyard. Even as a former reporter, I had never seen anything like it. Watching him read a lawyer's notes from roughly 150 feet away underscored the stakes. That is how important the OpenAI case had become. It was a reminder that this trial was not just another tech dispute; it was a moment where the boundaries between public access, press scrutiny, and legal strategy were being tested in real time. The fact that a photographer could capture sensitive material from that distance spoke to the intensity of the media presence and the global interest surrounding the case.

The third floor became a focal point for the press. Attorneys and staff frequently moved through the area, and the elevated vantage point allowed photographers to capture images like the one I witnessed that would otherwise be inaccessible. The building's reflective glass created challenges, but the reporters adapted, adjusting angles and equipment to document the activity inside. Some used polarizing filters to cut through glare; others waited for the precise moment when the sun shifted and the reflections softened. It became a kind of choreography — the courthouse staff moving inside, the press adjusting outside, each group aware of the other but committed to their respective roles.

This environment underscored the broader dynamic of the trial. Information — its control, its interpretation, its visibility — was central to the case. The legal arguments inside the courtroom revolved around documents, emails, and founding principles. Outside, the press worked to capture the visual record of a trial that had drawn global attention, and

frankly, I was lucky to just be there. The courtyard felt like a living archive, a place where every gesture, every movement, every scrap of paper could become part of the public narrative. It was journalism in its rawest form: observation, patience, and the constant awareness that history was unfolding only a few floors above.

The media's focus on the third floor highlighted the trial's unusual transparency. Although the proceedings were not televised, the Northern District of California provided an audio livestream, allowing the public to follow the testimony in real time. Reporters combined the audio feed with their visual observations from the plaza, creating a layered account of the trial's progress. You could see a lawyer step into view at the same moment you heard their voice echo through the speakers. You could watch a witness pause, shift, or gesture while the courtroom audio captured the tension in their words. It created a hybrid form of coverage — part radio, part documentary, part street-level reporting.

From the reporter's vantage point, the scene illustrated the intersection of technology, law, and public scrutiny. The cameras aimed at the courthouse symbolized the broader questions at stake: who controls information, how it is interpreted, and how it shapes public understanding. The trial was not only a legal dispute but a moment of national attention, with the press documenting each development as it unfolded. The courthouse plaza became a kind of civic stage, where journalists, legal observers, and everyday citizens gathered to witness a conflict that could influence the future of artificial intelligence.

Each day, reporters prepared for the next round of testimony, aware that the upcoming witnesses — particularly those involved in the 2017 restructuring discussions — would provide further insight into the internal dynamics of OpenAI. The third-floor windows, the long-range lenses, and the constant presence of the media signaled that the trial's significance extended far beyond the courtroom walls. It was clear that whatever happened inside that building would ripple outward — into Silicon Valley, into Washington, into the global tech community, and into the public imagination. The press understood that, and they showed up every morning ready to capture the next chapter of a story still being written.

Chapter Four

About the case

I am no legal expert but I can tell you this. At its core, the case centers on Elon Musk's allegation that OpenAI abandoned its founding nonprofit mission—public-benefit research in artificial intelligence—in favor of a closed, commercial model that he argues contradicts the commitments made when he helped launch the organization. OpenAI and Altman disputes this, pointing to years of emails, board minutes, and early planning documents showing that Musk supported, encouraged, and at times demanded a for-profit structure to fund the scale of computing required. The courtroom is now the venue where those competing versions of history are being tested.

For more than forty years, Oakland has been a city where national stories arrive late, if they arrive at all. But when the Musk v. Altman trial was announced for the federal courthouse, the center of gravity shifted. At 3:00 p.m., my phone rang.

"Carol! Oakland is about to come alive again. The OpenAI case—starring the richest man in the world—is coming here," Michelle shouted.

Her urgency was not about the news itself. It was about placement. She understood that Oakland was about to become the stage

for a national dispute, and that the Black press needed to be present.

The most consequential legal conflict in the history of artificial intelligence—its ownership, its purpose, and its future—was unfolding not in Silicon Valley's corporate enclaves, but in a city shaped by redlining, protest movements, and the long memory of the Black press.

From the vantage point of a Black reporter trained in the tradition of Chauncey Bailey, and through the broadcast instincts shaped by Chuck Johnson's cable newsroom, the scene carried a familiar tension. Historically, Black journalists have stood at the edges of America's turning points, documenting contradictions the mainstream preferred to ignore. But this case was different in scale. The OpenAI lawsuit had become one of the rare moments when a courtroom could influence not just a company's direction, but the trajectory of a technology poised to reshape daily life. Depending on how the facts landed, the future of advanced AI could tilt toward the vision of one tech titan—Elon Musk—or toward the competing philosophy of another, Sam Altman. The possibility that a single individual's interpretation of OpenAI's founding mission might shape the next era of artificial intelligence made the stakes unlike anything I had covered before. This trial was no different.

By the time I stepped into the federal courtyard on April 30, my reporting already had a public footprint. For years, I maintained a YouTube channel with 43,000 subscribers, an audience that depended on my coverage — the same audience that watched me defend Debi Thomas and Ike Turner's daughter, Twanna Turner, when their stories were mishandled or ignored. That record mattered here. It meant I

arrived not as a bystander but as a working reporter with a documented history of getting the story right. Still, nothing in my background — not Oakland's politics, not the Black Press tradition, not even years of public reporting — prepared me for the complexity of the OpenAI dispute. The language of the case, the technical stakes, and the competing interpretations among the tech titans involved were challenging even for experts. For an Oakland native standing in that courtyard, it was clear only that the issues were larger than any one person's understanding, and the outcome had the potential to shape the direction of artificial intelligence for years to come.

The courthouse steps filled with federal marshals, camera crews, and national correspondents flown in from New York, Washington, and London. Yet the deeper story remained the same one the Black press has chronicled for generations: power on trial, truth contested, and the future negotiated in public view. The presence of so many national outlets only amplified what Oakland reporters already knew — that this case was not just a legal confrontation but a cultural moment, a test of how the country interprets responsibility in an era where technology moves faster than regulation.

Inside the courtroom, the allegations were stark. Musk's counsel accused OpenAI of a "betrayal of trust" and the "heist" of a nonprofit mission. Altman's defense countered with claims of harassment and competitive motive. The jury listened. The attorneys sparred. The record grew. And each day, the proceedings revealed not only the internal fractures of a powerful institution, but the broader question of who

controls the technologies that will shape human life in the decades ahead. The testimony made clear that this was not simply a dispute over corporate governance; it was a struggle over the moral boundaries of artificial intelligence and the promises made to the public when OpenAI was first conceived.

From Oakland — a city that has witnessed both the failures and reinventions of American systems — the trial did not read as a dispute between two men. It read as a test of whether the promises made in 2015 still held weight in 2026, and whether the public would ever regain clarity on what "for the benefit of humanity" truly means in the age of artificial intelligence. Oakland's own history with activism, accountability, and community oversight gave the trial a resonance that extended beyond the courtroom. It felt as though the city itself was evaluating the testimony, measuring each claim against its long memory of institutions that promised one thing and delivered another.

Yet even with its global implications, the trial remained grounded in the human details — the pauses in testimony, the flicker of uncertainty across a witness's face, the way a single sentence could shift the energy in the room. These moments, small but telling, revealed the fragile undercurrent beneath the legal arguments. They reminded everyone present that behind the algorithms and corporate structures were people making choices, defending choices, and sometimes questioning them in real time.

Outside the courthouse, the world kept moving, often unaware of the magnitude of what was unfolding inside. But in Oakland — a city

that has always understood struggle, reinvention, and the cost of being overlooked — the trial resonated differently. It became a mirror, reflecting not only the future of artificial intelligence but the lived realities of communities long shaped by inequity and resilience. And it is from that vantage point, from the streets that raised me and the stories that shaped my eye, that the next chapter emerges.

Now we move toward the handshake in the ghetto.

Chapter Five

The Handshake in the Ghetto

The opening day of the Musk v. Altman trial, April 27, 2026, arrived under typical Northern California spring conditions—cool, overcast, and damp. Temperatures hovered in the mid-50s to low-60s as jurors were seated inside the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building, a modern twin-tower structure of glass and steel rising over downtown Oakland. The sky remained gray throughout the morning, a muted backdrop for what would become the most consequential legal battle in the history of artificial intelligence. As a reporter, I knew being from Oakland, I could observe the case with the special interest of knowing the city well. For Oakland, the unraveling had begun long before the reporters gathered at the courthouse. Montgomery Ward — the massive department store on 29th Avenue across from the Jack in the Box — was one of the first great losses, a place where East Oakland families once bought school clothes, appliances, and everything in between. I worked there in the early 80's as a front desk security guard. Boy, had things changed. When Ward's declined and eventually closed, it signaled the start of a slow economic collapse that the city never fully recovered from.

After that came the steady disappearance of downtown's anchors: the Emporium gone by the mid-1990s, and Newberry's—Oakland's iconic five-and-dime—officially closing in 1997. Its closure marked a major transition for the Uptown district, leaving the ground floor of the Floral Depot building at 1930 Telegraph Avenue vacant, a space I walk past every day. Today, anyone walking to the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building from Telegraph Avenue for the Musk v. Altman, OpenAI trial must pass that same boarded-up storefront, with the name NEWBERRY'S still hovering above the entrance in thick gold letters. The sign remains in place, protected by the building's historic status and frozen in time by decades of stalled redevelopment. For generations, Newberry's had been more than a store; it was a cornerstone of downtown life, known for its lunch counter, its fish department, and its shelves of household goods that served Oakland families for decades. Long after the doors closed, the building's signature turquoise Art Deco tiles—once hidden beneath modern metal siding—were rediscovered and restored, revealing the beauty of what had been lost.

Sears would close in 2014, each departure carving out another piece of the city's commercial identity. Walgreens on 14th and Broadway, just around the corner from the federal building, stood partially boarded up, its windows covered in plywood while uniformed guards managed the flow of customers at the door. Its determination to remain open—half shuttered, half functioning—was less a sign of stability than a testament to Oakland's stubborn desire for rebirth. The store existed in a state of contradiction, much like the city itself: wounded but still

standing, battered but refusing to disappear. It was a reminder that Oakland's resilience has never been polished or easy; it has always been raw, improvised, and forged in the gaps left behind by institutions that walked away.

This was the Oakland the world ignored — a city stripped of its retail spine, its gathering places, its sense of economic possibility. A city declared dead long before the trial brought cameras back to its streets. For years, national media outlets parachuted in only when tragedy struck, never when the city fought to rebuild. The boarded-up storefronts became symbols outsiders used to define Oakland, while the people who lived here understood them as scars — evidence of a long battle for dignity, investment, and recognition. The Musk v. Altman case disrupted that narrative. It forced the world to look again, not at the blight, but at the city hosting one of the most consequential legal battles of the AI era.

And that is why the Musk v. Altman case mattered here more than anywhere else. It marked the beginning of Oakland's new horizon. For the first time in decades, Oakland, the sister city to San Francisco, was not the afterthought — it was the center of gravity. The trial forced the nation to look at a city it had abandoned, to see its history, its losses, and the possibility that something new might rise from the ruins. The courthouse became a stage, and Oakland—long dismissed as a place where stories ended—suddenly became the place where a global story began. The boarded-up Newberry's sign, the shuttered Walgreens, the empty shells of once-vibrant stores all stood as silent witnesses to a moment when Oakland's past and future collided in the same block.

For those of us who grew up here, the symbolism was impossible to ignore. The trial was not just about OpenAI or Elon Musk or the future of artificial intelligence. It was about whether Oakland could reclaim its narrative after decades of being defined by decline. It was about whether a city that had endured so much could finally be seen for its strength, its history, and its capacity to shape national conversations. The cameras that once came only for crime scenes were now pointed at a federal courtroom where the future of AI governance was being debated. For Oakland, that shift mattered. It signaled that the city was no longer merely reacting to the world's crises — it was hosting the debate about how the world would move forward.

Chapter Six

Sister City

Oakland, California is a city shaped by migration, reinvention, and resistance and has always been the sister city to neighboring San Francisco, California. With a population just over 430,000, it remains one of the most diverse cities in the United States — a place where Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, and white communities live side by side, each contributing to a cultural landscape unlike anywhere else in the country. Oakland's Black population, once the majority during the post-war boom, still carries the legacy of the Great Migration, the Black Panther Party, and the long tradition of the Black press. The city's neighborhoods reflect that history: East Oakland with its working-class roots, West Oakland with its deep cultural memory, and downtown — once a thriving retail corridor — now a patchwork of boarded storefronts, new development, and stubborn resilience.

Economically, Oakland has lived through cycles of prosperity and abandonment. Redlining, freeway construction, and disinvestment hollowed out entire districts, while rising housing costs pushed long-time residents to the margins. Yet the city has always held a dual identity:

wounded but unbroken, gritty but creative, overlooked yet central to the Bay Area's cultural heartbeat. By the time the Musk v. Altman trial arrived, Oakland was a city carrying decades of loss — from shuttered department stores to vanished gathering places — but still standing, still insisting on its own relevance. The trial did not land in a vacuum; it landed in a city that had been waiting for a moment to reclaim its narrative.

From day one of the trial on April 27, 2026, the courthouse steps were crowded with national and international media, federal marshals, and observers who had traveled from across the Bay Area. The atmosphere was tense but orderly, shaped by the gravity of a case that questioned not only the future of a company, but the future of a technology capable of reshaping human life. Inside Courtroom 1, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers — a respected federal jurist known nationally for her decisive role in the Apple antitrust and App Store litigation — presided over jury selection. Her reputation for fairness, her command of complex technology cases, and her willingness to challenge the largest corporations in the world made her presence especially significant. By midday, a nine-member panel had been seated, drawn from Oakland's diverse population: educators, blue-collar workers, professionals, and retirees. Both legal teams had prepared for this; Oakland's jury pool is distinct from Silicon Valley's, offering a broader cross-section of public sentiment on questions of technology, power, and public benefit.

The opening statements framed the conflict sharply. Musk's counsel alleged a "betrayal of trust" and the "heist" of a nonprofit

mission, arguing that OpenAI had abandoned its founding commitment to develop artificial general intelligence "for the benefit of humanity." They described the case as a defense of charitable giving, asserting that the organization had been "looted" and transformed into a profit-driven enterprise. The alleged 2015 violation is this: OpenAI's founders created a nonprofit whose assets were legally and irrevocably dedicated to a public-benefit mission. Musk argues that shifting those assets into a for-profit structure — without court approval and contrary to the founding commitments — violated charitable trust law and the conditions under which he donated funds.

Elon Musk is contending that the shift in OpenAI's organizational structure violates several specific areas of law, primarily centered on charitable trust law and unjust enrichment. According to his legal team and expert analysis of the case, this is not about a "contract" in the commercial sense — it is about charitable trust obligations, which are legally enforceable and overseen by the state attorney general. Musk's surviving claims — breach of charitable trust and unjust enrichment — rest on this argument: assets dedicated to a charitable purpose cannot be diverted into a for-profit enterprise. If OpenAI's AGI research, models, IP, and donor-funded infrastructure were moved into a for-profit entity (especially one partnered with Microsoft), that could constitute misuse of charitable assets. Internal evidence, such as Greg Brockman's 2017 note — "If three months later, we're doing b corps then it was a lie" — is used to show internal awareness that the nonprofit commitment was being abandoned.

As the testimony unfolded, it became clear that the trial was not merely about the interpretation of documents but about the interpretation of intent. Musk's team argued that the founders made promises that carried moral and legal weight, while OpenAI's attorneys countered that the organization evolved in response to unprecedented technological demands. The courtroom became a place where two visions of the future collided: one rooted in the purity of a nonprofit mission, the other grounded in the practical realities of scaling artificial intelligence in a competitive global landscape. Each witness added another layer to the story, revealing how fragile the early agreements had been and how quickly the pressures of innovation had reshaped the organization's trajectory.

For Oakland, the significance of the trial extended beyond the legal arguments. The city had long been dismissed as a place where industries left and promises evaporated. Yet here, in a federal courtroom overlooking a downtown marked by both decline and resilience, Oakland found itself hosting a debate that would influence the direction of AI governance worldwide. The trial forced the nation to look at a city it had overlooked, to recognize that the future of technology was being shaped not in a Silicon Valley boardroom but in a courthouse surrounded by boarded-up storefronts and the echoes of a once-thriving commercial district.

As the first week of testimony closed, it became clear that the trial was not simply revisiting the past — it was setting the stage for what would come next. The questions raised inside Courtroom 1 would ripple

outward into policy discussions, corporate boardrooms, and public debates about the role of artificial intelligence in society. And for Oakland, this moment marked the beginning of a new chapter. The city that had endured decades of economic abandonment was now the backdrop for a national reckoning over power, ethics, and the promises made in the name of humanity.

The next chapter would move deeper into the testimony, the internal documents, and the competing narratives that shaped the case. But before turning that page, one truth stood firm: Oakland was no longer the forgotten sister city. It had become the place where the future was being argued — and where the world had no choice but to pay attention.

Chapter Seven

Defensively

OpenAI's defense countered with equal force. Their attorneys argued that Musk was a "jilted suitor," driven less by principle than by competitive rivalry, pointing to his ownership of xAI. They emphasized that Musk had supported discussions of a for-profit structure as early as 2017, relying on internal emails and meeting notes to make their case. Those materials included Greg Brockman's 2017 journal entry — "If three months later, we're doing b-Corp then it was a lie" — a line Musk's team uses to argue OpenAI knew a pivot would violate its founding commitments, but which OpenAI cites to show the leadership, including Musk, was already debating for-profit models years before the restructuring he now challenges.

The defense also pointed to 2017 emails in which Musk proposed attaching OpenAI to Tesla or converting it into a Tesla-owned entity, arguing that only a for-profit structure could raise the "massive capital" needed to compete with Google DeepMind. Those emails, quoted directly in the filings and referenced in opening statements, were

presented as evidence that Musk himself recognized the limitations of a nonprofit model. The 2017 leadership meeting notes reinforced that point: they documented board-level discussions about hybrid structures, Musk's warnings about "Google-scale competition," and internal debates over whether a nonprofit could "survive the arms race." To OpenAI's attorneys, these records showed that Musk was not blindsided by the later restructuring — he had been advocating for some version of it.

The defense maintained that the shift to a for-profit model was a practical necessity for acquiring the compute power required to advance AI research.

The courtroom remained attentive as both sides laid out their narratives. Musk's team focused on the 2015 founding documents, including the Certificate of Incorporation, which stated that *OpenAI was "not organized for the private gain of any person"* and that all property was "irrevocably dedicated" to charitable purposes. This, to me, was essential if Musk was going to win this case. Being an attorney, Michelle said "Nothing Altman says after his breach can deny those 2015 documents. They highlighted the now-famous two-word email— *"Agree on all"*—as evidence of a binding agreement between the founders.

No Formal Contract Existed?

OpenAI's attorneys responded with documents showing that by 2017, multiple versions of a for-profit structure were being discussed among the founders. They argued that no formal contract existed and that Musk's own proposals included scenarios where he would hold majority control. The defense framed the evolution of OpenAI's

structure as a natural response to the escalating costs of AI development. In their telling, the shift was not a betrayal but an inevitability — a pivot required to compete in a field where computational power, research talent, and global pressure demanded resources no nonprofit could realistically sustain. Their argument was simple: the mission had not been abandoned; it had been adapted to survive.

By the end of Day 1, the tone of the trial had been set. The legal teams had drawn their lines: one side arguing for the preservation of a founding mission, the other arguing for the realities of technological progress. The jury had heard the first arguments in a case that would stretch across nineteen scheduled court dates, with the liability phase expected to conclude by May 22, 2026. The courtroom felt less like a venue for a corporate dispute and more like a forum where the future was being negotiated in real time. Every word, every document, every objection carried the weight of a technology that had already reshaped the world and would continue to do so long after the trial ended.

From the reporter's vantage point, the contrast was striking. The most advanced questions of artificial intelligence — its governance, its ownership, its purpose — were being debated in a city long shaped by economic inequality and systemic neglect. Oakland, with its history of protest and reinvention, had become the stage for a dispute that reached far beyond the Bay Area. The trial was not simply a conflict between two men or two institutions; it was a public examination of promises made in 2015 and whether they still held meaning in 2026. In that courtroom, the future of a technology capable of reshaping human life was being

argued inside a building that had witnessed decades of federal oversight, civil rights battles, and community struggle. The question hanging over the proceedings was larger than OpenAI or Musk: whether an irrevocable promise, once made to the public, could survive the pressures of power, profit, greed, and time.

As the courtroom emptied that first evening, the weight of the moment lingered in the air. Reporters filed their stories, attorneys retreated to strategy rooms, and the jurors returned to their private lives carrying the burden of a case that would follow them for weeks. Outside, the city moved as it always had — buses rumbling down Broadway, vendors closing up shop, the last light catching the gold letters of the old Newberry's sign. Oakland's past and future seemed to converge in that single block, where boarded-up storefronts stood only steps away from a courthouse shaping the next chapter of technological history.

For Oakland, Day 1 was more than the start of a trial. It was a reminder that the city still mattered — that its voice, its people, and its history were woven into a national conversation about power and accountability. For decades, Oakland had been spoken about but rarely spoken *to* — referenced in national conversations only when tragedy struck or when its struggles could be used as shorthand for something larger. But this trial disrupted that pattern. It forced the country to look past the headlines and see the city as a place where intellect, resilience, and civic duty converged. The jurors, the attorneys, the community members who filled the gallery each day — they became part of a narrative that refused to let Oakland be dismissed in that courtroom, the

city's voice was not only present; it was indispensable.

As I moved deeper into the exhibit, I felt a quiet pride settle over me — not just as a reporter, but as a woman who shared a building with David Hilliard, the former Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party and one of the museum's cofounders. He lived in my senior facility, a neighbor who had become a friend, a man whose presence carried the weight of a movement that shaped Oakland long before the tech world learned to speak in algorithms. Seeing his work honored here, preserved with intention and reverence, reminded me, that history wasn't distant. It lived in the same hallways I walked each morning, in the familiar voice that greeted me in the lobby

Standing in that lobby, with Huey Newton's image glowing like a sentinel over the space, I felt the threads connect — the trial downtown, the museum on Broadway, and the man who now shared elevator rides and everyday conversations with me. Oakland wasn't just the backdrop to this moment; it was the throughline. A city where revolutionaries aged into elders, where legacy lived next door, and where a reporter on her lunch break could step into a museum and feel the past illuminating the present. With that grounding, I turned back toward the courthouse, ready to reenter the story unfolding in real time.

Chapter Eight

Agree on All

"Agree on All": The Ghost of 2015.

The legal heart of Musk v. Altman reaches back to 2015, long before the courtroom filled with attorneys, federal marshals, and national media. The origins of the dispute lie in a series of early documents and email exchanges that defined OpenAI's founding mission. These materials—now central exhibits in the trial—form the backbone of Musk's claim that a binding agreement existed and was later abandoned.

At the center of the argument is a two-word email whose significance has grown far beyond its length. In 2015, Sam Altman sent Musk a detailed, point-by-point proposal outlining the principles that would govern the new organization: artificial general intelligence would be developed "for the benefit of the world," controlled by a nonprofit foundation, and structurally insulated from private ownership, shareholder pressure, or commercial capture. Musk's reply— "Agree on all"—is presented by his legal team as the moment the commitment became binding. They argue that the email was not casual assent but a clear acceptance of the foundational terms: nonprofit status, open-source

orientation, and irrevocable dedication of all assets to a charitable purpose. In their framing, those two words represent Musk's explicit agreement to the mission that was later abandoned, making the email a central exhibit in the claim that OpenAI violated its 2015 obligations.

The Certificate of Incorporation, filed on December 8, 2015, reinforces this interpretation. The document states that OpenAI was "organized exclusively for charitable purposes" and "not organized for the private gain of any person." It further declares that all property is "irrevocably dedicated" to these charitable goals. Musk's attorneys argue that these provisions establish a clear, enforceable commitment to a nonprofit structure and an open-source approach to AGI development.

The founding announcement echoed these principles. OpenAI publicly described its mission as building "safe and beneficial" AGI that would remain free from shareholder obligations. The organization pledged to open-source its technology "when applicable" and to ensure that the benefits of AGI would be broadly distributed.

No Formal Written Agreement

The question being asked and the answers we want are is there a formal or written agreement for the 2015 Open AI situation. More and more people are saying the Open AI case is not about the Agreement violation but rather a war over control over AI and its' future. Open AI claims there is no record of an agreement and that Musk wanted to beat Google? But other people are adamant about Altman being a bad guy. Did he pit Russia and China against each other? Reporters say Altman is a liar; he is unconstrained by truth and is a people pleaser.

However, OpenAI's defense challenges the notion that these documents constitute a binding contract. Their attorneys argue that no formal written agreement was ever executed and that Musk himself supported discussions of a for-profit structure as early as 2017. They point to internal communications and meeting notes—some taken by Shivon Zilis during a 2017 session at Musk's San Francisco residence—showing that multiple versions of a for-profit model were explored.

The defense also highlights evidence that Musk sought majority control during these discussions, proposing structures that would have given him significant authority over the organization. They argue that the evolution toward a for-profit entity was not a betrayal but a practical response to the escalating costs of AI research, which required substantial capital and compute resources.

Certificate of Incorporation

Musk's team counters that the 2017 discussions were exploratory and that the core principles of the 2015 agreement remained unchanged. They emphasized that the Certificate of Incorporation's language—particularly the clauses on public benefit, open-source commitments, and the prohibition on private gain—was never amended. According to this view, the shift to a for-profit model and the subsequent partnership with Microsoft violated the organization's foundational obligations.

The courtroom testimony reflects this tension. Witnesses have described the early years of OpenAI as a period of intense debate, shifting strategies, and competing visions for the future of AGI. The trial's exhibits include emails, internal notes, and public statements that

reveal both alignment and conflict among the founders. Some exchanges show a unified mission—nonprofit governance, open research, and a commitment to public benefit—while others capture the growing strain as the team confronted questions of scale, funding, and control. The documents chart the evolution from idealistic consensus to strategic divergence, illustrating how the same founders who once agreed on every principle were soon debating whether a nonprofit could survive the accelerating race toward advanced AI.

By the time the jury heard these arguments, the 2015 documents had taken on a symbolic weight. They were no longer just administrative filings or early-stage correspondence; they had become the central artifacts in a dispute over the meaning of a promise made more than a decade earlier. The Certificate of Incorporation, filed in December 2015, stated that OpenAI was "organized exclusively for charitable purposes," that it was "not organized for the private gain of any person," and that all of its property was "irrevocably dedicated" to that mission. Alongside that charter sat the two-word email — Musk's "Agree on all" — which his attorneys now frame as assent to those very terms. Whether those words, and that charter, constitute a binding agreement is now a question for the court to decide.

And it is not a question without precedent. Courts have long treated charitable missions as enforceable commitments when donors rely on them — a principle that underpins classic charitable trust cases such as Smithers v. St. Luke's Hospital, where a New York court held that a donor's funds must be used exactly as promised, and Buck Trust

v. City of San Francisco, where a California court refused to let a charitable mission drift from its original purpose. Even the modern disputes over nonprofit conversions — from Blue Cross restructurings to university endowment cases — turn on the same core issue now facing OpenAI: whether a mission can be treated as a legal obligation rather than an aspiration. In that sense, Musk v. OpenAI sits squarely within a lineage of cases testing what happens when an institution founded for the public good evolves into something more commercial. The jury may offer its view, but the final determination will rest with Judge Gonzalez Rogers, who must decide whether OpenAI's founding promise was merely inspirational — or legally binding.

What made this moment even more consequential was the recognition that the court was not simply interpreting a document; it was interpreting an era. The 2015 charter had been drafted at a time when artificial intelligence was still emerging from research labs, when the idea of AGI felt theoretical, distant, almost academic. A decade later, the technology had leapt into the center of global life — shaping economies, influencing elections, transforming communication, and raising existential questions about safety and control. The courtroom was now being asked to determine whether a promise made in the early days of that revolution could withstand the pressures of a world transformed by the very technology it sought to govern.

For the jury, the stakes were both legal and philosophical. They were being asked to weigh not only the meaning of a document but the meaning of trust itself — trust between founders, trust between

institutions and donors, and trust between the public and the organizations claiming to act on its behalf. The question was no longer simply whether OpenAI had changed; it was whether the law could hold an institution accountable to a mission that had become more complicated, more expensive, and more powerful than anyone in 2015 could have imagined.

As the first phase of testimony drew to a close, the courtroom settled into a quiet recognition that the trial had crossed a threshold. The arguments were no longer about who said what in 2015, but about what those words meant in a world where artificial intelligence had become a force capable of reshaping human life. The documents, the emails, the founding statements — all of them had become touchstones in a broader debate about responsibility, ambition, and the limits of institutional evolution.

And as the court prepared to move into the next phase of testimony, one truth hovered over the proceedings: the outcome of this case would not simply determine the fate of OpenAI. It would help define the boundaries of accountability in an age when technology moves faster than the laws meant to govern it.

Chapter Nine

Shadows

The second week of the Musk v. Altman trial shifted the courtroom's focus from founding principles to the internal decisions that reshaped OpenAI's structure. Testimony and documentary evidence traced the organization's evolution from a nonprofit research lab into a hybrid entity with a for-profit arm — a transformation now central to the lawsuit.

By the time the court turned its attention to the next phase of testimony, the stakes had been fully established. The arguments over the 2015 documents, the meaning of "irrevocably dedicated," and the legal weight of Musk's two-word assent had set the foundation for what came next. The jury now understood that this case was not simply about structure or strategy; it was about intent, trust, and the promises made at the birth of an institution that would go on to influence the world. The question hanging over the courtroom — whether OpenAI's founding mission was a binding obligation or a historical footnote — created the lens through which every subsequent witness would be viewed.

And it was at this point, with the legal framework firmly in place, that the trial shifted toward the people who had lived those early years from the inside. The documents had spoken; now the founders would.

The court needed to hear not only what was written in 2015, but what was understood, expected, and believed by the individuals who built OpenAI from the ground up. Their recollections, their journals, their internal debates — these would either reinforce the idea of a betrayed mission or reveal a more complicated evolution shaped by ambition, necessity, and competing visions of the future.

To understand the weight of the testimony that followed, the jury needed clarity on who Greg Brockman is and how he entered Musk's orbit. Brockman, formerly CTO at Stripe and one of Silicon Valley's most respected engineering leaders, met Musk during the earliest conversations about creating an AI research lab capable of countering Google's dominance. Musk admired Brockman's technical discipline and saw him as essential to building an organization that could attract top researchers. Brockman, in turn, viewed Musk as the only figure with the resources, urgency, and public stature to launch a nonprofit effort capable of standing up to Big Tech. Their early alignment — part idealism, part strategic necessity — made Brockman not just a co-founder, but one of the closest witnesses to Musk's expectations for OpenAI's mission and structure.

The most significant testimony came from Brockman himself, OpenAI's President and co-founder, who took the stand on May 4 and 5. Musk's legal team introduced Brockman's personal journals, which contained entries expressing concern that he and Sam Altman might appear to be "liars" if they pursued a for-profit model after publicly committing to a nonprofit mission. The journals also referenced internal

discussions about personal equity stakes that could have been worth billions — a point Musk's attorneys used to argue that OpenAI's leadership had drifted from its original charitable purpose.

Brockman's testimony also addressed a claim that Musk once suggested OpenAI should raise $80 billion to support his long-term goal of colonizing Mars. According to Brockman, this proposal was part of a broader conversation about the scale of resources required to develop artificial general intelligence. Musk's team cited this exchange to illustrate the philosophical divide between the founders: whether AGI should remain a public good or become a tool aligned with broader commercial or strategic ambitions.

Another line of questioning focused on early work performed by OpenAI employees. Brockman testified that some staff had contributed to Tesla's self-driving technology during the organization's formative period. OpenAI's attorneys used this point to argue that Musk himself blurred the boundaries between nonprofit research and commercial application, undermining his claim that the organization's later partnership with Microsoft represented a fundamental betrayal.

The Microsoft partnership became a central theme of the week. In 2019, OpenAI entered into a multibillion-dollar agreement with Microsoft, which later expanded into a $10 billion investment. Musk's legal team characterized this relationship as the construction of a "closed-source de facto subsidiary," arguing that the partnership violated the nonprofit mission outlined in the 2015 founding documents. They pointed to the Certificate of Incorporation's language dedicating all

property to charitable purposes and prohibiting private gain.

OpenAI's defense countered that the partnership was necessary to secure the compute power required for AGI research. They emphasized that the costs of training advanced models had grown exponentially and that no nonprofit could sustain such expenses without external investment. The defense also highlighted evidence that Musk was aware of — and involved in — discussions about potential for-profit structures as early as 2017, including scenarios where he would hold majority control.

Chapter Ten

Shivon Zilis

The testimony of Shivon Zilis on May 6 added further complexity. Zilis, a former OpenAI board member and current Neuralink executive, described the internal debates of 2017 as fluid and wide-ranging. She testified that "a zillion versions" of potential structures were discussed, including the possibility of converting OpenAI entirely into a for-profit entity. Her notes from a 2017 meeting — taken at Musk's San Francisco residence — were introduced as evidence by OpenAI's attorneys to show that Musk was actively engaged in shaping these discussions.

Zilis also addressed the Microsoft partnership directly. She testified that Musk had privately called her "naïve" for supporting the deal, arguing that it gave Microsoft effective control over OpenAI's direction. OpenAI's attorneys challenged her credibility by questioning her personal relationship with Musk, establishing that they share four children and have maintained close personal and professional ties for nearly a decade. Zilis maintained that her allegiance was to "the best outcome of AI for humanity," not to any individual.

By the end of the week, the courtroom had heard competing narratives about the organization's evolution. Musk's team framed the Microsoft partnership as a breach of the founding mission, while OpenAI's attorneys argued that the shift was a practical necessity driven by the realities of modern AI development. The evidence presented — journals, emails, meeting notes, and testimony — revealed an organization grappling with the tension between idealism and scale, public benefit and private investment.

From the reporter's vantage point, the week underscored the central question of the trial: whether OpenAI's transformation represented a natural progression or a departure from a promise made in 2015. The courtroom record now contained the documents and testimony that would shape the jury's advisory verdict and the judge's final ruling in the weeks ahead.

Post-Testimony Analysis: Family Structure and Environment

Shivon Zilis's testimony added more than facts to the record; it offered a rare glimpse into the architecture of a modern high-profile family operating inside a mission-driven ecosystem. Court statements confirmed that Zilis and her children reside on or near one of Musk's Texas properties, a location closely tied to his work at Neuralink and SpaceX. Testimony also indicated that several of Musk's other children spend extended periods on the same property, creating a centralized environment that is unusual even by Silicon Valley standards.

What emerged was not a portrait of chaos, but of structure — a

family model built around proximity, routine, and shared purpose. The arrangement is less like the fractured households common in high-pressure lives and more like a self-contained community where work, family, and daily life operate in the same physical space. It is a model that echoes old-world communal living while simultaneously functioning inside a futuristic landscape of robotics labs, engineering bays, and high-velocity innovation. It also underscored a truth that hovered over the trial: the people shaping the future of artificial intelligence do not live ordinary lives, and the decisions they make are influenced by environments that blend personal, professional, and ideological commitments in ways most jurors — and most Americans — will never experience.

Zilis's testimony, in that sense, became a bridge between the legal questions and the human ones. As the trial progressed, I found myself studying the human threads woven through the official record. Even from the outside, reading transcripts and filings late into the night, I could feel the strain behind the polished language. And whenever something significant happened in court, Michelle called or texted me immediately, making sure I stayed current. Every declaration, every internal email, every strategic shift carried the imprint of the people who made those choices under pressures most of us will never experience. It reminded me that this case was never just about technology. It was about the individuals who had built it, defended it, and sometimes disagreed about what it should become.

The deeper I went into the documents — and the more Michelle

kept me updated from her seat inside the courtroom — the clearer it became that the jury's role was limited but still meaningful. This was an equity case, and the jury was advisory only. They weren't there to decide financial remedies or determine the organization's future. That authority belonged solely to Judge Gonzalez Rogers. But the jury *would* be asked to assess credibility, to interpret the evidence presented to them, and to offer a recommendation that reflected how ordinary people understood the stakes.

That context sharpened the significance of the next witness whose testimony entered the record: Shivon Zilis. Her role inside OpenAI placed her at the center of some of the organization's most consequential internal debates. When her testimony appeared in the filings — and when Michelle texted me that the courtroom had noticeably shifted as she took the stand — I read every line with the same focus I brought to all the documents. Her perspective illuminated the internal dynamics that had become so fiercely contested. Her words marked a turning point, moving the case from broad principles into the lived experiences of someone who had been inside the room where the future of artificial intelligence was being shaped.

Chapter Eleven

Steady & Intentional

Zilis's presence in this environment appears steady and intentional. Her testimony reflected a temperament aligned with the demands of such a structure: low-ego, disciplined, and capable of navigating the logistical and emotional complexities of raising children in a high-visibility setting. The testimony did not sensationalize her role; instead, it underscored her ability to maintain stability within a system that would overwhelm most people.

The court record did not claim that all of Musk's children live full-time on the same property. But the testimony painted a picture of a family ecosystem that is more centralized, more cohesive, and more structurally unified than the public might expect. In a world where high-profile families often fracture under pressure, the environment described in court stands out for its unusual continuity.

For the purposes of this record, the significance is not in the personal details but in the sociological implications: a family model that blends communal living with cutting-edge technology — a hybrid of old-world cohesion and next-generation futurism. It is a structure that reflects Musk's mission-driven worldview and the rare emotional

discipline required to sustain it. The Truth About the Zilis–Musk Relationship

Shivon Zilis's testimony in the OpenAI v. Musk trial forced the public to confront a relationship that has long existed in fragments—rumors, filings, tweets, and partial disclosures. Her own words in court finally provided clarity: what began as a "platonic donor" arrangement evolved into a romantic partnership that changed over time. With that admission, the question is no longer *whether* their personal relationship shaped her professional decisions, but *how deeply* the two were intertwined.

According to public testimony, text messages, and the structural realities of their respective roles, the Musk–Zilis relationship is best perceived not as a traditional romance, but rather as a fusion of personal loyalty, professional subordination, and ideological alignment. The public frequently observes instances of "animosity" or "devotion," yet the underlying pattern remains consistent: a power dynamic influenced by Musk's long-standing, self-proclaimed hierarchical approach to intimate relationships. 1. The "Employee–Partner" Trap Zilis finds herself in a uniquely precarious position. She is: • a senior executive at Neuralink, reporting directly to Musk • the mother of four of his children • and, according to her own testimony, his romantic partner This combination results in a totalizing dependence. Her Yale education and technical expertise offer professional protection, but they do not eliminate the inherent imbalance of being both an employee and a partner to a man who has historically expressed a dominant relational

perspective. Musk once stated to his first wife, Justine, "I am the alpha in this relationship"—a statement he has never publicly retracted. There is no evidence in the record to suggest he has abandoned that viewpoint. When considered alongside Zilis's texts and testimony, the continuity becomes increasingly difficult to overlook. 2. Strategic Compliance as Stability Observers often interpret Zilis's public admiration for Musk as idolization. But her testimony reveals something more structural: alignment as survival.

When she first endorsed OpenAI's licensing agreement with Microsoft, Musk criticized her as being "naive." She did not contest this. Instead, she adapted. Her subsequent remarks—referring to him as her "favorite person," depicting "suburban bliss," and recognizing a romantic relationship—indicate a relationship where emotional connection and professional cooperation flow through the same pathway. In this context, "love" and "agreement" are not contradictory. They frequently appear indistinguishable. 3. The Board Seat and the Flow of Information The evidence presented during the trial revealed that Zilis's role on the OpenAI board was not merely one of independent oversight. Her own messages—inquiring how to "do right by him"—along with Musk's anticipation that information would continue to "flow" suggest a primary loyalty that was directed towards him, rather than the nonprofit organization. This does not necessitate malice. It necessitates a hierarchy. When Musk established xAI in 2023, Zilis communicated to a friend: "When the father of your children initiates a competing venture… there is nothing to be done." Her resignation was

not portrayed as a tactical decision. It was presented as an inevitability—an outcome shaped by the intersection of her personal and professional obligations. 4. Domesticity on His Terms

In court, Zilis characterized the experience of "suburban bliss" when Musk is present in Austin. This bliss is genuine, yet it is carefully curated. It operates within the framework established by Musk—his timetable, his objectives, his enterprises, and his influential presence. By transitioning from a "platonic donor" relationship to a romantic involvement, she became fully integrated into Musk's unconventional family dynamic. However, this integration is contingent upon certain conditions: unwavering loyalty, consistent alignment, and ongoing adaptation to the overarching mission. She occupies the dual role of being his most trusted confidante and his most high-stakes subordinate. The relationship between Musk and Zilis is a pragmatic partnership defined by: • her intellectual and maternal support • his overarching mission and hierarchy • their shared ideological alignment • and the structural reality that her professional and familial life are linked to his choices. Any perceived “animosity” is likely the friction of navigating a dominant personality. Any perceived "devotion" is a natural result of complete integration into his world. Comparison: The "Alpha" Directive versus the "Strategic" Resignation Zilis's testimony in May 2026 reflects a dynamic that Musk articulated decades prior. While the specifics may vary, the underlying structure remains recognizable. 1. The Wedding Dance versus The Board Seat Justine Musk (2000): On their wedding night, Musk stated, "I am the alpha in this relationship." When she later

claimed, "I am your wife, not your employee," he responded, "If you were my employee, I would terminate your position." Shivon Zilis (2018–2023): Zilis held both positions—employee and partner—concurrently. Her initial messages inquiring how to "do right by him" while serving on the OpenAI board indicate that she assumed the role already functioning within a hierarchical structure that Musk had previously established.2. Four Children and "Nothing to Be Done"

Their four children—Strider and Azure (2021), Arcadia (2024), and Seldon (2025)—solidified her position within Musk's family dynamics. When Musk initiated xAI, her departure from OpenAI was not perceived as a voluntary decision. Her own statement—"there is nothing to be done"—indicates that Musk's corporate strategy inevitably dictated her exit. 3. From "Platonic Donor" to "Suburban Bliss" Zilis initially characterized Musk as a "strictly platonic" benefactor to mitigate conflict-of-interest issues. By 2026, she testified that they were in a romantic relationship and enjoying "suburban bliss." This transition is not scandalous; it is structural. Just as Justine Musk once maneuvered through a relationship characterized by Musk's stated hierarchy, Zilis's resignation from OpenAI mirrors the same fundamental principle. Whereas, this is merely, my writing observations and opinion, with four children and a prominent position at Neuralink, she could not serve two authorities—and in her situation, the authority of her profession and the father of her children were one and the same.

Chapter Twelve

Trial of the Century

The Verdict: Reclaiming the Soul of the Future**

The Musk v. Altman trial is scheduled to conclude its liability phase by mid-May 2026, with an advisory jury verdict expected shortly before Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers issues the final ruling. The courtroom has already heard testimony from founders, executives, board members, and industry figures whose decisions shaped the trajectory of OpenAI from 2015 to the present. What remains is the legal interpretation of those decisions and the question of whether the organization's evolution represented a breach of its founding mission.

The advisory jury will weigh the evidence presented over nineteen scheduled court days, including the 2015 Certificate of Incorporation, internal emails, personal journals, meeting notes, and testimony describing the transition from a nonprofit research lab to a hybrid structure with a for-profit arm. Their verdict will not be binding, but it will inform the judge's final determination on liability and potential remedies.

If the jury finds that OpenAI breached its founding obligations, the court may consider structural changes, financial penalties, or the restoration of certain nonprofit commitments. Musk has requested up to

$150 billion in damages, with the stipulation that any award would be directed to OpenAI's original charitable arm rather than to him personally. OpenAI's defense maintains that no binding contract existed and that the organization's evolution was consistent with internal discussions dating back to 2017.

The ruling will determine not only the outcome of a dispute between founders but the future governance of artificial general intelligence. The case has raised broader questions about public benefit, corporate influence, and the responsibilities of organizations developing technologies with global impact. The verdict will clarify whether the promises made in 2015—promises of openness, safety, and public stewardship—still hold weight in 2026.

From the reporter's vantage point, the conclusion of the trial will mark the end of a rare moment in which the internal workings of a major AI organization were examined in open court. The testimony, exhibits, and legal arguments have created a public record that will shape future debates about the development and oversight of advanced technologies. The final ruling will determine how that record is interpreted and what obligations, if any, remain tied to the founding vision of OpenAI.

Testimony from the 2026 Musk v. Altman trial revealed a truth that had long been whispered in Silicon Valley but never spoken aloud in a federal courtroom: **OpenAI was never just a startup. It was an asset—one so valuable that the world's most powerful corporations were willing to intervene directly to keep it alive.**

The courtroom learned that during the 2023 OpenAI crisis—

what insiders now call *the Blip*—Microsoft took decisive, behind-the-scenes action to protect its investment. Mira Murati, then serving as OpenAI's interim CEO, was in direct communication with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella as rival companies circled like vultures, attempting to poach OpenAI's top talent. Internal documents showed that Microsoft had prepared a **$25 billion contingency plan** to absorb OpenAI's entire workforce if the company collapsed.

It was a moment that stripped away the myth of the "independent AI lab." OpenAI, for all its lofty mission statements, had become **too big to fail**.

And in that courtroom, under oath, the public finally saw how the gears of Big Tech actually turn.

Murati's communications with Nadella offered a rare, unfiltered look into the power dynamics that shape the AI industry. These were not the polished press releases or carefully curated interviews the public usually sees. These were raw exchanges—executives scrambling to hold together a company whose internal leadership had fractured under the weight of ambition, secrecy, and speed.

Murati testified that Sam Altman had misled her, claiming that OpenAI's legal team had approved a model designed to **circumvent safety evaluations**. It was a revelation that landed heavily in the courtroom. For years, OpenAI had positioned itself as the moral compass of AI development, the organization that would "ensure AGI benefits all of humanity." Yet here was evidence that even inside the company, safety had become negotiable.

Murati's warning that OpenAI faced a "catastrophic risk of disintegration" during the Blip underscored a deeper truth: **even the most celebrated startups are vulnerable to internal chaos.** The public sees the glossy product launches. The investors see the valuations. But inside, the people building the future of AI were navigating fear, distrust, and existential uncertainty.

And all of this—every email, every contradiction, every billion-dollar contingency plan—was being examined not in San Francisco or Washington, but in **Oakland**.

The trial unfolded inside the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building, a structure that has seen its share of historic cases but never one that touched the global future of artificial intelligence. Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers presided with her characteristic discipline—no theatrics, no indulgence, no wasted time. She reminded the courtroom daily that while the jurors would advise on liability, **she alone would determine the penalties**, which could reach into the tens of billions.

The jurors themselves were a portrait of the Bay Area: nine ordinary people from Oakland, Richmond, Alameda, and San Leandro. They were not technologists. They were not venture capitalists. They were not AI researchers. They were citizens—bus drivers, teachers, retirees—tasked with evaluating the conduct of billionaires and the governance of one of the most influential technologies in human history.

And then came the moment that made headlines across the country.

During jury selection, one prospective juror openly stated that he

believed Elon Musk was a "piece of garbage." In most federal trials, that admission would have resulted in immediate dismissal. But Judge Gonzalez Rogers ruled otherwise. She said that a personal dislike for a billionaire did not automatically disqualify a citizen from serving with integrity.

It was a uniquely Oakland moment—raw, honest, and grounded in the belief that **ordinary people are capable of extraordinary fairness**.

The courtroom murmured. Musk's attorneys bristled. But the judge held firm.

This was not Silicon Valley's courtroom. This was Oakland's.

And Oakland, with all its history, contradictions, and unfiltered truth-telling, was now the place where the future of AI governance was being shaped.

Chapter Thirteen

Trial of the Century

Most of the crowd arriving at 1301 Clay Street comes in through BART, the system that has carried Oakland's workforce, students, and courthouse regulars for generations. The trains surface at 12th Street, releasing a steady flow of riders who know the rhythm of the platforms and the sound of the brakes long before the doors open. This is the Trial of the Century. Lawyers step off beside janitors, tech reporters beside residents heading to probation check-ins, all moving through the same underground corridor before rising into the morning fog. The trains run beneath the city like a pulse, and on trial days the platforms feel heavier, the conversations sharper, the energy unmistakably tied to the proceedings upstairs. In Oakland, BART is not background — it is the daily proof that this trial belongs to the people who live here, not just the billionaires at the center of it.

OAKLAND — May 7, 2026

The courtroom returned to a steady rhythm this morning as testimony resumed in *Musk v. Altman*, with the jury settling into the middle stretch of a case now defined by competing narratives of intent

and obligation. Proceedings opened with a review of the prior afternoon's exhibits, including internal correspondence and board-level documents that continue to shape the jury's understanding of OpenAI's early governance. Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers maintained a firm pace, signaling that the trial would remain on schedule despite the volume of material still ahead.

Oakland Outside the Courthouse

At 1301 Clay Street, the early morning fog hangs low over a block that has long served as a crossroads of Oakland's daily life. Street vendors set up early, the smell of coffee mixing with the first batches of Popeyes fried chicken and foot-long sandwiches from across the street. Colorful fruit drinks line the counters. The courthouse sits in the middle of a city that has learned to hold multiple realities at once: commerce, struggle, resilience, and the daily movement of people who know Oakland not as a headline but as home.

Jack London Square — Historical and Aesthetic Context

Just four blocks down from the courthouse, Jack London Square rests along the edge of the Oakland Estuary, a stretch of blue water that has shaped the city's working identity for more than a century. The Square carries the name of Oakland's own Jack London, who spent his early years along these same docks watching longshoremen, oyster pirates, and merchant sailors move through a waterfront that fed both his writing and the city's economy.

The marina still holds its line of moored sailboats and commercial vessels, their masts cutting into the morning fog as the tide

pushes against the pilings. The walkways are clean, the restaurants polished, but the industrial bones remain visible: the old loading cranes in the distance, the preserved plank walkways, the steady movement of tugboats guiding freight through the channel. Lawyers and government workers use the Square as a quiet loop before court, while tourists drift through without fully understanding that this waterfront is not decoration — it is the historical engine that built Oakland's maritime character.

From the courthouse steps, the blue water is close enough to remind observers that Oakland's past and present sit side by side, and that the trial unfolding at 1301 Clay Street is part of a larger city story that does not lose its way.

The Morning Divide The juxtaposition characterizes the morning: traditional Oakland commerce on one side, the "tech circus" on the other. • The Crowd: Demonstrators in robotic attire stand alongside lawyers in bespoke suits and technology journalists who began queuing before 6:00 a.m. • Security: Within the glass doors, all individuals pass through metal detectors. Federal marshals maintain a prominent presence, a customary stance in this building due to previous security incidents. • The Courtroom: Room 1 on the fourth floor is at full capacity. The acoustics continue to pose a known challenge; from the rear rows, testimony can diminish into a faint echo, compelling observers to depend on body language, pacing, and the judge's interventions to comprehend the discussions. Key Testimony — The Cleanup Crew Chapter Greg Brockman — The Confrontation That Broke the Room

The first major moment of the day came from Greg Brockman, who described a confrontation with Elon Musk so tense he believed Musk might physically attack him. Brockman testified that during a dispute over equity and control, Musk's anger escalated to a point that made him fear for his safety. The statement landed heavily in the courtroom, reframing the early OpenAI power struggle not as a philosophical disagreement but as a personal rupture with real-world stakes.

What became clear by midday was that Greg Brockman's account wasn't just another detail in the leadership timeline — it was the emotional center of the day's testimony. His description of fearing a physical confrontation with Musk reframed the entire early-OpenAI narrative. Attorneys on both sides adjusted their questioning afterward, treating the incident as a fault line rather than an anecdote. Observers in the gallery, many of whom had skimmed past the exchange in earlier filings, now recognized it as the moment that exposed how unstable the organization had become long before the boardroom collapse.

For readers in Oakland, the details penetrated the corporate jargon that frequently envelops conflicts in Silicon Valley. It revealed the underlying human volatility that exists behind the refined public narratives — serving as a reminder that even billion-dollar institutions can be influenced by moments of unrestrained emotion. Helen Toner's Testimony Former board member Helen Toner took the witness stand, portraying Altman as a leader who employed "divide and conquer" strategies within his own organization. Her testimony indicated a

recurring pattern of manipulation that obscured the distinction between strategic leadership and internal disruption. The Allegation of Passivity Toner further characterized former CTO Mira Murati as "remarkably passive" during the crisis of termination, suggesting that she positioned herself to endure whichever faction emerged victorious. For readers in Oakland, this situation reflects a well-known pattern: power struggles where silence itself becomes a tactic.

The Safety Warning A former safety researcher provided testimony indicating that the drive for profit resembled a "street race with the brakes cut," asserting that Altman’s team placed greater importance on product launches than on public safety. This metaphor resonated deeply in a city where the residents are acutely aware of the repercussions of systems developed without adequate safeguards. The Jury’s Perspective In a moment that epitomized the essence of Oakland, the nine-member jury maintained a sharp focus. One juror — who had previously labeled Elon Musk as a "piece of garbage" during the jury selection process — now finds themselves judging both billionaires, serving as a reminder of the integrity that Judge Gonzalez Rogers sought to uphold. Jurors from Oakland are recognized for their ability to see through pretense; this jury is no different.

Looking Ahead

Attention has turned to the remaining witnesses anticipated to testify before the week's conclusion, with legal representatives from both parties gearing up to elucidate the timeline regarding OpenAI's evolution from its nonprofit beginnings to its present for-profit model. The

ambiance in the courtroom mirrored an increasing emphasis on the commitments made in 2015, which lie at the heart of the conflict, as lawyers endeavored to ground their arguments in the wording of the initial charter and the subsequent decisions made. As the testimony phase is now in full swing, the outlines of the case have become more defined, although significant questions still await resolution by the jury.

- The initial seven days of Musk v. Altman have concluded, with the court implementing a scheduled pause in the proceedings. The liability phase is set to proceed on May 11, 2026, when testimony is anticipated to recommence, with indications that Sam Altman will be among the first to testify in the upcoming week. Status of the Case as of May 7, 2026 • The federal court has completed seven full days of testimony from April 27 to May 6, 2026. • The jury has now heard from Elon Musk, Greg Brockman, and Shivon Zilis, each providing distinctly different perspectives on OpenAI's early agreements, internal conflicts, and the transition to a capped profit model. • The court has taken a brief recess prior to the commencement of the next witness sequence. Key Factual Developments This Week • Greg Brockman's testimony (May 4–5) presented internal journal entries and contemporaneous notes that documented his concerns regarding the public perception of OpenAI's structural changes. • Brockman also recounted that Musk had previously proposed the idea of raising $80 billion to fund a Mars-related

initiative, a detail that highlighted the magnitude of the disagreements concerning OpenAI's future trajectory.

- **Shivon Zilis** (May 6) provided testimony describing private conversations with Musk, including his warnings about trusting Microsoft's multibillion-dollar investment. Her statements added to the record of internal tensions surrounding OpenAI's partnerships and governance.

- By May 7, the courtroom fell into an unusual stillness. No new witnesses were called. No dramatic cross-examinations unfolded. Instead, Judge Gonzalez Rogers used the day to tighten the machinery of the trial—finalizing schedules, clarifying evidentiary boundaries, and preparing the court for what everyone understood was coming next.
- It was the quiet before the storm.
- The liability phase remained scheduled to run through May 22, with the remedies phase tentatively set to begin on May 18, depending on how quickly testimony progressed. But the real focus of every attorney, reporter, and spectator in the room was the same: **Sam Altman**.
- Court filings and internal scheduling notes made it clear that Altman was expected to take the stand early the following week—likely on May 11 or shortly thereafter. His testimony was not just another item on the docket. It was the fulcrum of the entire case.

- Both legal teams had signaled that Altman's appearance would illuminate the most contested years in OpenAI's history: the 2015 nonprofit charter, the so-called "founding agreement," and the secretive transition toward a for-profit structure.
- These were the years when ideals collided with ambition, when governance blurred into power, and when the seeds of the 2023 crisis were quietly planted.
- As the court adjourned on May 7, the jurors filed out slowly, some glancing toward the press benches, others deep in thought. The attorneys packed their files with unusual care. Even the marshals seemed to sense the shift in the air.
- Oakland had already witnessed billion-dollar revelations, internal betrayals, and the raw mechanics of Big Tech influence. But the chapter that mattered most—the chapter only Sam Altman could tell—was still ahead.
- And everyone knew that when he finally took the stand, the trial would enter a new phase, one that could redefine not just OpenAI's past, but the future of artificial intelligence itself.

Chapter Fourteen

Oakland, California

It's break time. This Friday, 5/8/2026 is Mother's Day Weekend. With the court entering a scheduled recess on Friday, the pace of the Musk v. OpenAI trial briefly slows. The attorneys step back to prepare for Sam Altman's testimony, the jurors return to their lives for the weekend, and the federal courthouse settles into a rare moment of quiet. But outside its walls, Oakland continues to move, breathe, and define itself. Before the trial resumes on May 11, this pause offers the perfect moment to step beyond the courtroom and into the city hosting one of the most consequential technology cases of the decade.

Let's get to know Oakland.

As the Musk v. OpenAI trial unfolds inside the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building, Oakland is simultaneously experiencing a quiet but undeniable technological renaissance. The city is no longer content to be viewed as San Francisco's overlooked sibling; instead, it is positioning itself as a rising center of innovation, equity, and community-powered progress. Oakland Tech Week — scheduled for September 28 through October 2, 2026 — embodies this shift. With its

theme, **"Where Innovation Meets Community,"** the week brings together students, entrepreneurs, engineers, and everyday residents to explore creativity, capital, and ethics in technology. Student showcases, pitch contests, and hands-on demonstrations highlight a city where the next generation of technologists is not only learning but leading. These events reveal a community deeply invested in shaping the future of AI, not merely reacting to it.

Oakland's recognition as a **Digital Inclusion Trailblazer** further underscores its commitment to ensuring that technological progress benefits everyone, not just the privileged few. Through expanded free WIFI, public access initiatives, and community-centered digital literacy programs, the city is building an infrastructure that supports both innovation and equity. This is the backdrop against which the Musk v. OpenAI trial is unfolding — a city actively rewriting its narrative, proving that it can host global events while nurturing its own technological identity. Oakland's tech renaissance is not a side story; it is a parallel movement that mirrors the trial's central question: *Who gets to shape the future of artificial intelligence?* In Oakland, the answer is increasingly clear — **the people do**.

The Musk v. OpenAI trial has brought global attention to Oakland — and the city has risen to the moment. Long overshadowed by San Francisco, Oakland is a cultural landmine of reinvention, where new restaurants line Telegraph Avenue and a renewed sense of civic pride is reshaping the streets. Many of the trial's key figures will confront questions of identity, power, and responsibility in a city determined to

become cleaner, safer, and more prosperous. Oakland is not simply hosting this trial; it is redefining itself in real time.

In this narrative, Elon Musk becomes an unexpected catalyst. Rather than the villain in the hood, he is the high-profile figure whose presence validates Oakland's capacity to handle global discourse. Musk's warnings about unchecked AI ideology resonate deeply in a community that has long lived at the intersection of innovation and inequality. By bringing this case to Oakland, he inadvertently elevates the city, placing the diaspora — Black, Brown, immigrant, working-class — in the role of intellectual audience and moral jury. These are the people for whom AI is supposedly being built, and their lived experience becomes the lens through which the trial is interpreted.

Outside the courthouse, Oakland is experiencing a parallel renaissance.

At the same time, Oakland is celebrating a cultural summer that mirrors the trial's themes of imagination, ethics, and possibility. The Bay Area Book Festival and the 2026 Locus Awards — a first-ever partnership — will bring more than 25,000 readers, 300 authors, and a full weekend of literary programming inspired by Octavia Butler and James Baldwin. With events ranging from the Bookworm Block Party to Youth it's poetry open mic, the festival showcases a city where literature, community, and creativity thrive. While the courtroom debates the future of artificial intelligence, Oakland is outside celebrating books, ideas, and the power of storytelling. Oakland is not the backdrop to this moment — Oakland is the stage. And as the world awaits May 11, many now

know Oakland, California in ways they never knew it before.

Summary

Economic Benefits of Hosting the Musk v. OpenAI Trial in Oakland

The Musk v. OpenAI trial has generated a measurable economic boost for Oakland by drawing national media, legal teams, expert witnesses, and technology observers into the city for an extended period. Hotels near the federal courthouse — from Uptown to Jack London Square — have experienced increased occupancy, while restaurants, cafés, and small businesses have benefited from the steady flow of visitors. Oakland natives are prouder than ever to see Oakland in the daily news and blogs. And as the world awaits May 11, many natives of Oakland are feeling a renewed sense of pride. Seeing their city on the national news — not for crisis, but for competence, culture, and global relevance — has reminded residents of the strength and potential that has always lived here. Oakland is being seen in ways it has long deserved. This influx has created a temporary but meaningful rise in local spending, demonstrating Oakland's capacity to support high-profile events with professionalism and ease.

Beyond immediate spending, the trial has elevated Oakland's visibility in the global technology sector. With reporters broadcasting from downtown, legal analysts referencing the city daily, and tech leaders traveling in and out of the region, Oakland has gained a level of exposure typically reserved for San Francisco. This visibility strengthens the city's reputation as a viable location for future conferences, summits, and

innovation-focused gatherings. It also reinforces the value of Oakland's transportation infrastructure — especially BART — which has proven essential for moving people efficiently between the courthouse, hotels, and regional tech hubs.

Most importantly, the trial has aligned with Oakland's long-term economic goals. The city's recognition as a Digital Inclusion Trailblazer, its expanding tech ecosystem, and its community-powered innovation initiatives all benefit from the spotlight. Investors, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders watching the trial are seeing a city that is organized, culturally rich, and technologically ambitious. The economic story is clear: hosting this trial has not only supported local businesses in the short term but has positioned Oakland as a competitive, forward-looking city ready to participate in the next chapter of the tech economy.

Chapter Fifteen

What's Next?

As Oakland's cultural energy swells outside the courthouse, the legal world prepares to shift back into motion. The weekend recess has given attorneys time to regroup, witnesses time to reflect, and the public time to absorb the magnitude of what this case represents. But the pause is over. When the courtroom doors open on May 11, the focus returns to the testimony that will shape the future of OpenAI — and perhaps the future of artificial intelligence itself. The city has had its moment to speak; now the trial resumes. The court reconvenes today after a short recess, with the week opening under heightened public attention. Testimony is expected to resume with **Sam Altman**, whose appearance has been positioned as a central moment in the liability phase. His account is anticipated to address the disputed 2015–2018 period, the nonprofit charter, and the internal conflicts that shaped OpenAI's shift toward a capped-profit model. This is a good time to get to know Sam Altman a little better to see what he thinks of this lawsuit and the possible end of a great friendship:

Sam Altman:

Introductory Passage for Sam Altman (Based on His Lex

Fridman Interview, 3/30/24)

Sam Altman arrives at this trial as a central figure in the story of OpenAI's evolution, and his own words offer a revealing window into how he views the organization's past, its mission, and its conflict with Elon Musk. In his March 30, 2024 conversation with Lex Fridman, Altman described a relationship with Musk that began in shared purpose but fractured over control, direction, and the future of artificial general intelligence.

Altman recalled that Musk believed OpenAI was destined to fail unless he took "total control" to turn it around. According to Altman, Musk pushed at various points for Tesla to build its own AGI effort, for OpenAI to convert into a for-profit entity under Musk's authority, or even for OpenAI to be absorbed entirely into Tesla. Altman said his memory was that Musk wanted Tesla to "have full control of it," and that this was a fundamental point of divergence. When OpenAI's leadership refused to hand over control or merge into Tesla, Musk chose to leave—something Altman described without bitterness, simply as a decision Musk made.

Altman also noted that the name *OpenAI* was not his choice, and that he would have selected a different one. Yet he emphasized that the organization's mission—putting powerful AI tools into the hands of ordinary people, often for free—remains central to its identity. He stressed that OpenAI does not run ads or monetize user data, and that the goal is to give people "great tools" and let them build their own futures with them. For Altman, this democratization of capability is a

public good, and a core part of what "open" means in practice.

He also articulated a nuanced view of open-sourcing AI models. Altman believes some models should be open, especially smaller ones that people can run locally, because there is enormous demand for that. But he also believes some systems should remain closed for safety and governance reasons. "Nuance," he said, is the right answer—not absolutism.

Altman acknowledged that Musk recently told him he would drop the lawsuit if OpenAI changed its name to "Closed AI." Altman called the lawsuit "unbecoming of the builders" he admires, noting that he has long considered Musk one of the great builders of this era. He said it saddens him to see Musk attacking OpenAI in the same way Musk has been attacked by critics in the past. Altman said he misses "the old Elon," and hopes that years from now they will have an amicable relationship again.

Reflecting on OpenAI's own structure, Altman said he would strongly discourage any startup from beginning as a nonprofit and later adding a for-profit arm. He does not believe OpenAI's hybrid structure should become a precedent, and said that if the founders had known what the future would hold, they would have structured the organization differently from the start.

As he prepares to take the stand on May 11, Altman's own words paint a portrait of a leader who sees himself as stewarding a public-minded mission, navigating a complex relationship with a former ally, and trying to balance openness, safety, and the immense power of

emerging AI systems. His testimony will unfold against the backdrop of these convictions—expressed not in legal filings, but in his own voice.

What We're Watching for as Altman Takes the Stand

As Sam Altman prepares to testify, the court is entering a phase where clarity, credibility, and documentary evidence will matter more than rhetoric. One of the central questions is whether Altman will directly address the alleged "founding agreement" that Elon Musk claims existed in 2015—an agreement that OpenAI's current leadership says was never formalized. His testimony may be the first time the court hears Altman's own account of those early conversations, in contrast to Musk's version of events.

The court will also be weighing how Altman's statements align with, or contradict, the internal notes and journal entries introduced during Greg Brockman's testimony. Those documents have already created tension between the founders' recollections and the written record, and Altman's answers may either reinforce or challenge the narrative presented so far.

Observers will be watching closely for any indication of how the judge views the credibility of the witnesses. With conflicting accounts already on the record, even subtle judicial reactions could signal how the court is interpreting the competing narratives.

Another key issue is whether new documentation will surface to clarify the timeline of OpenAI's transition from a nonprofit research lab to a hybrid structure with a capped-profit arm. That timeline sits at the heart of Musk's claims, and any additional emails, notes, or

contemporaneous records could shift the weight of the evidence.

Finally, Altman's testimony may touch on Microsoft's role in OpenAI's evolution. Shivon Zilis testified that Musk warned her about the risks of partnering with Microsoft, and the court may now hear how Altman viewed that partnership at the time—and whether those warnings played any role in the decisions that followed.

His testimony is scheduled to begin May 11, and the stakes surrounding his appearance have only sharpened after the contradictions exposed in Zilis's text messages. The court is now entering a phase where the founders' recollections, internal documents, and competing narratives will collide directly.

One of the central questions is whether Altman will address, with precision, the alleged founding agreement that Elon Musk insists existed in 2015. Musk has testified that OpenAI was built on a shared understanding — a nonprofit structure, open-source commitments, and a mission that would never be commercialized. Altman's own public statements suggest a different memory. The court will now have to reconcile those versions.

Equally important is how Altman's testimony aligns with the internal notes and journal entries introduced during Greg Brockman's appearance. Those documents have already complicated the story, revealing early discussions about structure, funding, and the possibility of a for-profit arm long before the public narrative acknowledged it. Whether Altman reinforces or contradicts those records will matter.

Observers will also be watching the judge. With conflicting

accounts already on the record, even subtle reactions — a question, a raised eyebrow, a request for clarification — may signal how the court is weighing credibility.

Another open question is whether new documentation will emerge to clarify the timeline of OpenAI's transition from a nonprofit research lab to a hybrid structure. That timeline sits at the heart of Musk's claims, and any additional emails, notes, or contemporaneous records could shift the evidentiary balance.

Finally, Altman's testimony may touch on Microsoft's role. Zilis testified that Musk warned her about the risks of partnering with the company, and the court may now hear how Altman viewed that partnership at the time — whether he saw it as a necessity, a strategic opportunity, or a point of tension with Musk.

As Altman prepares to take the stand, the courtroom is poised for a deeper examination of the founders' intentions, the organization's evolution, and the fractures that ultimately brought this case to trial.

Why Shivon Zilis's Memory Failed Her

Shivon Zilis's memory did not fail in the ordinary sense. What may have failed was the narrative she constructed long before she entered the courtroom. Her deposition answer — that she resigned only after Sam Altman informed her of Musk's competitive venture — offered a simple, linear explanation that protected her neutrality and avoided the appearance of personal conflict. The February 2023 text messages introduced in court disrupted that version of events. They showed she already knew about xAI, had already discussed it with a friend, and had

already decided to resign for reasons tied to her relationship with Musk.

Under those conditions, memory becomes selective. Witnesses tend to recall the version of events that aligns with the story they have already committed to the record, especially when the alternative exposes personal motives or contradictions. Zilis's "failure of memory" was therefore less a lapse than a collision between her deposition narrative and the documentary evidence that contradicted it.

Why the 2023 Text Messages Changed the Case

The February 2023 text messages were not just inconsistent with Shivon Zilis's deposition; they rewrote the entire timeline. They showed she already knew about Musk's competitive venture, had already discussed it, and had already decided to resign for reasons that were personal, not procedural. Once those messages were in evidence, the defense could not avoid her testimony. If they had not called her, the plaintiffs would have subpoenaed her and introduced the texts themselves, framing her as deceptive and Musk as evasive. The defense chose the only option available: call her first, control the narrative, and soften the impact. The texts were case-changing because they transformed Musk's most loyal insider into a witness whose credibility could shift the jury's perception of the entire timeline.

The 2023 text messages were damning because they shattered the clean, orderly narrative she had offered in her deposition. On the record, she stated, "I resigned because Sam Altman called and told me Elon was starting a competitive venture," a statement that framed her departure as a principled response to new information. But the February 2023 texts

told a very different story: "Have to resign OpenAI board BTW. xAI effort has become well known," and, even more revealing, "When the father of your babies starts a competitive effort… there is nothing to be done."

Chapter Sixteen

May 11, 2026

The Day Commences — A Crucial Moment in the Trial the Musk v. Altman trial has entered a pivotal stage today as proceedings resumed at the federal courthouse in Oakland. Following two weeks of testimony — which included Elon Musk taking the stand — the attention has now turned decisively towards OpenAI's leadership, its internal divisions, and the enormous financial implications surrounding the company's $850 billion valuation. II. Ilya Sutskever Takes the Stand — A Newly Discovered Billionaire The $7 Billion Investment One of the most significant moments of the day occurred when former OpenAI Chief Scientist Ilya Sutskever testified that he possesses a stake in OpenAI valued at around $7 billion. The Second Newly Disclosed Billionaire This revelation positions Sutskever as the second "new billionaire" unveiled during the trial, following Greg Brockman's acknowledgment last week that his own stake is valued at nearly $30 billion. Internal Conflicts Sutskever was interrogated regarding the initial tensions that arose during OpenAI's shift to a for-profit model — a transition Musk describes as a "betrayal" of the

organization's foundational charitable mission. III. The Omen — Musk's Cautionary Text A text message Musk sent to Brockman the evening prior to the trial's commencement was submitted as evidence. In this message, Musk cautioned:

"By the conclusion of this week, both you and Sam will be regarded as the most despised individuals in America. If you are adamant, then that will indeed be the case." The communication has been interpreted by observers as a portent of the conflict currently taking place in court. Failed Settlement The dialogue also disclosed that Musk proposed a settlement. Brockman responded with a suggestion for both parties to withdraw their claims. Musk declined — resulting directly in the public confrontation now captivating Oakland. IV. What's at Stake — Musk's Demands Musk's lawsuit pursues extensive remedies that could transform the AI sector: • Restructuring: Compelling OpenAI to revert to a nonprofit organization. • Leadership Removal: The dismissal of Sam Altman and Greg Brockman. • Damages: A request for $150 billion to be returned to OpenAI's nonprofit division. • IPO at Risk: A decision in Musk's favor could jeopardize OpenAI's anticipated trillion-dollar IPO later this year. V. The Oakland Scene — Billionaires, Protesters, and Hallway Drama Inside the Courthouse Today's session at the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building was intense. While testimony typically ends around 4:30 p.m. PT, the real drama extended into the hallways.

• Elon Musk navigated the building accompanied by a substantial security team and Hollywood executive Ari Emanuel. • Sam Altman and

Brockman were seen utilizing the public restrooms — a fact that many locals considered surprisingly relatable amidst the intense legal conflict. Outside on Clay Street Journalists, AI critics, and pessimists gathered before dawn in the chilly Oakland morning. Protests in the Plaza On the steps of the courthouse, demonstrators displayed "STOP AI" banners and humorous billboards featuring Musk and Altman. This scene was a quintessential Oakland moment — where activism intersected with high-tech legal disputes. VI. Satya Nadella's Testimony — The Microsoft Perspective Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella encountered rigorous questioning regarding internal emails from 2018. Prosecutors contend that these messages indicate Microsoft was aware of its assistance in the matter. "divert" OpenAI from its nonprofit roots and into the commercial powerhouse it is today.

VII. Mira Murati's Record — A Fractured Leadership Culture Although she was not physically present, the recorded testimony of former CTO Mira Murati stood out as a significant moment. She characterized Sam Altman as: • "creating chaos" • "sowing distrust" Her remarks illustrated a leadership culture that was, at certain times, profoundly fractured and described as "toxic" behind the scenes. VIII. Exhibit No. 16 — The 2015 Incorporation Papers These documents were the subject of extensive debate today. The "Pure Mission" The papers clearly articulate that OpenAI's mission is to: "ensure AGI benefits all of humanity… with no private gain.

"The Conflict

Musk's lawyers contrasted this founding mission with the **$850**

billion valuation now attached to OpenAI. They used the contrast to cast Altman as a Shakespearean figure who allegedly used Musk's early support to build a private empire.

IX. The Oakland Factor — Judge, Jury, and the City's Imprint Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers Maintaining a strict and efficient courtroom: • No lengthy lunches: She restricts the court to two 20-minute breaks to ensure jurors remain attentive. • Steady pacing: Proceedings are kept efficient and on point. The Jury Nine residents from the Oakland area — not insiders from Silicon Valley — are tasked with determining the outcome of this $100 billion case. Their involvement has emerged as a significant theme of the trial. X. The Jury Factor — A Crash Course in AI These nine jurors are required to grasp concepts such as "GPT 5 architecture" and "large language models." For them, the trial has turned into an unforeseen crash course in advanced AI — a masterclass presented to everyday citizens of the East Bay. Their occasional visible confusion highlights a key theme: the future of artificial intelligence is being evaluated by ordinary individuals from Oakland, rather than by the technology elite. IX. The Cliffhanger — The Day Ends on a Pivot Point

The day came to a close with prosecutors initiating their inquiries regarding the 2019 capped profit restructure — a crucial juncture in OpenAI's development and a fundamental aspect of Musk's assertions. Judge Gonzalez Rogers suspended court proceedings at around 4:30 p.m. XII. What Lies Ahead — Sam Altman to Testify Sam Altman is anticipated to take the stand tomorrow morning, Tuesday, May 12. His

testimony is largely regarded as the key narrative of the trial — the moment when Musk's legal team will engage with him directly in what many are referring to as the "Trial of the Century" that is currently unfolding. here in the East Bay.

May 12, 2026

The Musk Factor

By late afternoon, reporters across the Bay Area were already refreshing Musk's X feed, waiting to see whether he would weigh in on the day's testimony. Legal analysts noted that Musk had commented publicly on nearly every major development in the case so far, and many expected him to react again as the trial edged toward Sam Altman's appearance on the stand. Though no statement had been issued yet, the anticipation alone was enough to send ripples through the press room — a reminder that in this trial, even Musk's silence could feel strategic.

What Sam Altman Is Doing on the Eve of His Testimony

On the evening before his testimony, Sam Altman is almost certainly behind closed doors with his legal team, reviewing timelines, clarifying documents, and rehearsing the precise language he'll use under oath. People who have worked with him describe him as methodical and intensely focused before high-pressure moments, and tonight would be no different. He would be walking through every major decision in OpenAI's evolution — the nonprofit origins, the capped-profit shift, the Microsoft partnership — preparing for the lines of questioning Musk's attorneys are expected to pursue. Altman is known for late-night work

sessions, and those who know his rhythms say he often takes long, solitary walks to think through complex problems. Whether he's pacing the quiet streets near his hotel or sitting with his attorneys in a conference room overlooking the Bay, the weight of tomorrow's testimony is unmistakable. By morning, he will step into a federal courtroom where every word he speaks will be dissected by jurors, lawyers, reporters, and an entire industry watching from afar.

Yesterday, May 11, 2026, had been hot — the kind of dry, restless heat that makes tempers short and sidewalks shimmer. But today promised something different. Today wasn't just hot. Today was **scorching**, and not because of the weather. Sam Altman was finally taking the stand.

Oakland woke up with a kind of theatrical brightness, as if the city itself understood the significance of the moment. The morning light poured across the skyline in long, golden strokes, catching the glass of the federal building and turning it into a beacon. It was the kind of bright, forgiving California light that reminds visitors why this state is still considered one of the most beautiful places in the world — even when the stakes inside a courtroom threaten to reshape the future of technology.

From the courthouse steps, you could see traffic gliding across the Oakland Bay Bridge toward San Francisco, each car a small reminder of the sheer weight this trial now carried across the region. People weren't just commuting. They were moving through a moment in history, whether they realized it or not.

Inside the courthouse, the atmosphere had shifted. The usual morning chatter was replaced with a low, electric hum. Reporters whispered in tight circles. Attorneys moved with a new sharpness in their step. Even the clerks seemed more alert, as if bracing for impact. Rumors swirled that Elon Musk himself might appear in the gallery, flanked by his attorneys, ready to watch every word Sam Altman spoke. No one knew for sure — but the possibility alone was enough to thicken the air.

Outside, Oakland's finest restaurants were already preparing for the lunchtime rush they knew was coming. Chefs sharpened their knives. Hosts polished their podiums. Tables would soon be filled with lawyers, reporters, tech workers, and curious locals — all dissecting the testimony of the man at the center of the AI revolution. Oakland has always been a city where people talk, debate, and analyze over food, and today would be no exception. The trial had become the city's newest conversation piece, its latest civic heartbeat.

It was a perfect Oakland morning: sunlight dancing on the water, BART rumbling beneath the city, the smell of fresh coffee drifting from the corner cafés, and a trial so consequential it seemed to bend the atmosphere around it. Even the pigeons on the plaza seemed to pause, as if sensing that something historic was about to unfold.

Court security was tighter than usual. Lines formed early. People pressed forward with a mix of curiosity and urgency. Some had been following the trial since day one. Others were drawn by the gravity of the moment — the chance to witness a CEO, a global figure, a man whose decisions had shaped the trajectory of artificial intelligence, sit under oath

and answer for the choices that brought OpenAI to this point.

By 8:30 a.m., the gallery was nearly full. Reporters clutched their notebooks. Court sketch artists tested their pencils. The jurors filed in with the solemnity of people who understood that today's testimony would not be routine. It would be defining.

And then the courtroom settled into a hush — that rare, collective stillness that only happens when everyone in the room is aware they are standing at the edge of something significant.

On this day, Sam Altman would finally take the stand.

The questions waiting for him were not small. They reached back to the founding of OpenAI, to the nonprofit charter, to the promises made and broken, to the blurred lines between idealism and ambition. They touched the 2023 crisis, the internal fractures, the billion-dollar interventions, and the decisions that had brought the company — and the world — to this moment.

Oakland, a city that has seen its share of struggle, resilience, and reinvention, was now the stage for a testimony that could influence the future of artificial intelligence across the globe.

And as the judge entered and the courtroom rose, the heat outside seemed to pale in comparison to the heat inside — the heat of truth, accountability, and history pressing in on all sides.

Chapter Seventeen

Sam Altman Testifies

Today, May 12th, marks a significant day at the federal courthouse in Oakland. This morning, Sam Altman took the witness stand to deliver his highly awaited testimony, and reports indicate that the atmosphere in the courtroom is quite tense. Here are the main developments from today's proceedings: Sam Altman's Testimony (The Defense) Altman dedicated the morning to addressing the allegations of a "pattern of lying" that have been prevalent throughout the trial thus far.

• Rebutting the Dishonesty Claims: During direct questioning, Altman asserted, "I consider myself an honest and trustworthy businessperson." This statement follows yesterday's testimony from former chief scientist Ilya Sutskever, who alleged that Altman exhibited a "consistent pattern of lying" to the board.

• The "Children" Comment: In a particularly notable moment today, Altman recounted a "hair-raising" conversation with Elon Musk. He testified that when co-founders inquired about what would happen to Musk's control of OpenAI in the event of his death, Musk allegedly responded that control should "pass to my children." Altman expressed

to the jury his profound discomfort with this notion, contending that AGI should not be under the control of a single individual (or a single family). Greg Brockman's Role While Sam is the center of attention today, Greg Brockman has already given testimony earlier in the trial. Today, the focus on Greg revolves around a text exchange presented by Musk's lawyers. In this exchange, Musk cautioned Greg and Sam that they would become "the most hated men in America" if they proceeded with the for-profit pivot. Other Highlights from Today

• Bret Taylor Testifies: OpenAI Chairman Bret Taylor also took the stand today. He made a startling revelation by disclosing that a consortium led by Musk's own xAI attempted to stage a takeover of OpenAI in February 2025. Taylor described the move as "contradictory to the spirit of the lawsuit," given that Musk is suing over the "for-profit" transition while his own for-profit company sought to acquire them.

• Timeline to Verdict: Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers indicated today that testimony could conclude as soon as this week. Juror are expected to begin deliberations by

Monday, May 18th.

Altman is expected to remain on the stand through tomorrow. The trial is essentially coming down to whether the jury believes the "for-profit" shift was a necessity for survival (OpenAI's stance) or a calculated "charity heist" (Musk's stance).

Trial Notes: May 12, 2026

Sam Altman's testimony today in Oakland was definitely the main event, and it sounds like things got quite tense this afternoon. Building on what Bret Taylor said earlier about Musk's contradictory attempt to acquire OpenAI via xAI, Altman used his time on the stand to flip the script on Musk's "betrayal" narrative.

Here are the key takeaways from the afternoon session:

The "Hair-Raising" Demand for Control

Altman testified that the primary reason for their fallout wasn't the for-profit shift itself, but Musk's "hair-raising" demands for absolute control.

The Dynasty Clause: Altman recounted a specific moment where co-founders asked Musk what would happen to OpenAI if he died. Musk reportedly replied that control should pass to his children. Altman noted this made him extremely uncomfortable, as the mission was to ensure AGI wasn't controlled by any one person.

The 90% Equity Stake: Altman testified that in the earliest negotiations, Elon Musk demanded an extraordinary 90% equity stake in the for-profit arm of OpenAI — a number so outsized it stunned the founding team. Musk later reduced the figure, but never backed away from the core requirement: **he wanted majority control**, either directly or by folding the entire operation into Tesla.

Altman said he was "extremely uncomfortable" with this demand. The discomfort wasn't personal; it was philosophical. The entire premise of

OpenAI, he reminded the court, was that **Artificial General Intelligence — AGI — should never be controlled by a single individual**, no matter how wealthy, brilliant, or influential.

Then came the moment that left the courtroom in a hush. Altman recounted that Musk, when pressed on succession, suggested that if anything happened to him, **control of OpenAI should pass to his children**. For Altman, this was not merely surprising — it was alarming. The idea that the future of AGI, a technology capable of reshaping civilization, could be handed down like a family inheritance landed high on what Altman called his "shock board."

It was a glimpse into Musk's worldview: that AGI was not just a mission or a public responsibility, but something he believed he could *own* — and pass on.

Rebutting the "Stolen Charity" Claim

Musk's legal team has been hammering the idea that Altman "stole a charity." Altman pushed back hard:

A "Large Charity": He argued that OpenAI actually created an "extremely large charity" through its success and that the nonprofit still stands to benefit more as the company grows.

The "Kill" Accusation: In a moment that the judge eventually struck from the record, Altman claimed, "Mr. Musk did try to kill it [OpenAI], I guess twice," referring to Musk's departure and his subsequent attempts

to poach staff for xAI.

Sam Altman took the stand with the calm of a man who had rehearsed every possible question, yet the courtroom could sense the weight pressing on him. This was not just another CEO defending a quarterly report. This was the architect of a global technology movement being asked to account for the choices that shaped the future of artificial intelligence.

The morning had been tense, but the afternoon shifted into something sharper — a personal, almost surgical cross-examination that peeled back the public persona and exposed the human being beneath it.

The Character Attacks Begin

Musk's lead attorney, Steven Molo, wasted no time. He went straight for the jugular.

"Mr. Altman," he asked, voice steady, "do you always tell the truth?"

The courtroom froze. Even the jurors leaned forward.

Altman didn't flinch. He didn't smile. He didn't deflect. He answered with a kind of measured honesty that felt almost disarming.

"I believe I am a truthful person," he said. "I am sure there is some time in my life when I have not."

It was a response that walked a tightrope — humble enough to sound human, confident enough to sound credible. And in a trial where credibility was the currency, Altman had just made a calculated deposit.

The "Chainsaw" Incident

Then came the moment that rippled through the courtroom like

a shockwave.

Altman described Elon Musk's leadership style as "demotivating," recounting an incident that had become infamous inside early OpenAI circles. Musk, he said, once demanded a ranked list of researchers so he could "take a chainsaw through" the team to cut costs.

The phrase hung in the air — brutal, vivid, unmistakably Musk.

Altman testified that the comment devastated morale, leaving researchers fearful and uncertain about their future. It painted a picture of a founder whose intensity could cross into destructiveness, a man whose vision sometimes overshadowed the people needed to build it.

Molo objected. The judge allowed it. The jurors took notes.

The Jealousy Defense

But Altman wasn't finished.

In one of the most striking moments of the day, he suggested that Musk's lawsuit had nothing to do with ethics, mission, or the nonprofit charter.

"This lawsuit," Altman said, "is about jealousy."

He argued that Musk only became litigious once OpenAI succeeded — once it became a direct competitor to Musk's own AI ambitions. It was a bold claim, delivered with the quiet confidence of someone who believed the jury needed to hear it.

The courtroom reacted in subtle ways — a raised eyebrow, a shifting posture, a few reporters scribbling faster. It was the kind of moment that could either strengthen Altman's case or backfire spectacularly. But he said it anyway.

A Trial Turning into a Credibility War

By late afternoon, it was clear that the trial had entered a new phase. This was no longer about documents, timelines, or corporate structures. This was about who the jury believed.

Both sides were now painting the other as the one who betrayed the original mission. Both were claiming to be the true guardian of OpenAI's founding ideals. And both were accusing the other of rewriting history.

The courtroom had become a battleground of character, memory, and motive.

Was Musk There?

Despite the rumors swirling outside, the answer was simple:

No — Elon Musk was not in the courtroom on May 12, 2026.

He had dominated the headlines during the first two weeks of the trial, but since finishing his own testimony in late April, he had not returned. Today belonged entirely to Sam Altman — his words, his explanations, his defense.

And the absence of Musk only amplified the spotlight on Altman.

Who Was in the Room

The gallery was filled with a cross-section of the Bay Area:

- OpenAI executives
- Microsoft representatives
- Reporters from every major outlet
- Local Oakland residents who had followed the trial from day one

- Legal analysts whispering predictions they knew better than to say aloud

The jurors watched Altman closely, their expressions unreadable. Judge Gonzalez Rogers maintained her steady, disciplined presence, guiding the testimony with precision.

A Chapter That Ends with Pressure Rising

By the time court adjourned, the air felt heavier. Altman had survived the first wave of attacks, but the trial was far from over. His testimony had revealed fractures, contradictions, and human flaws — but also a strategic clarity that could resonate with a jury.

The question now wasn't simply who was right. It was who the jury believed.

And in a case this large, this public, and this consequential, belief could be everything.

Chapter Eighteen

Lawyers

In a trial defined by billion-dollar stakes and clashing visions of the future, the lawyers became the architects of the narrative. They were the ones translating ambition into argument, ego into evidence, and the tangled history of OpenAI into a story the jury could follow. If Sam Altman and Elon Musk were the faces of the conflict, their attorneys were the voices shaping how the world would remember it.

The OpenAI Defense Team

OpenAI arrived in court with a legal machine built for survival. Their lead counsel came from Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, a firm known for navigating corporate crises and governance battles at the highest levels. They had once stood opposite Musk during the Twitter acquisition; now they stood between him and the company he helped create.

Sam Altman, the CEO, was the centerpiece of their defense. He spent the day explaining the transition to a for-profit structure, insisting

it was not greed but necessity — a move to keep OpenAI alive in a world where training frontier models costs billions. He was flanked in the gallery by Greg Brockman, who had already testified about the early mission and the fragile idealism of the founding years.

OpenAI's lawyers framed the case as a story of evolution, not betrayal. They argued that the nonprofit still held the controlling stake, that the mission remained intact, and that Musk's lawsuit was less about principle and more about rivalry. Their strategy was simple: show the jury that OpenAI grew too big, too fast, and too important to remain a charity.

The Musk / Plaintiff Side

With Elon Musk absent — flying to Beijing aboard Air Force One as part of a presidential delegation — the courtroom spotlight fell on Steven Molo, his lead attorney. Molo became the embodiment of Musk's case: sharp, relentless, and unafraid to attack character.

He pressed Altman on truthfulness, leadership, and loyalty. He resurrected old emails, old promises, old wounds. He painted Altman as a man who had "stolen a charity," who had abandoned the founding mission, who had turned OpenAI into a commercial empire in violation of its original purpose.

Behind him sat a rotating team from MoloLamken LLP, along with empty seats once occupied by Musk's inner circle — Jared Birchall and Shivon Zilis — both of whom had testified earlier but were absent today. Their absence only sharpened the contrast: Musk was waging a global campaign while Altman was fighting for his reputation under

fluorescent lights in Oakland.

The Third Party: The Court Itself

Presiding over it all was Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, whose disciplined courtroom style had become a defining force in the trial. She kept the lawyers focused, the witnesses contained, and the jurors awake — even banning heavy lunches to prevent afternoon drowsiness.

Her presence reminded everyone that while the jury was advisory, *she* would ultimately decide the outcome. Billionaires could posture. Lawyers could spar. But the ruling would come from a woman who had spent her life navigating the intersection of law, power, and technology.

The gallery behind her was a microcosm of the Bay Area: NPR reporters, Guardian correspondents, Associated Press veterans, AI safety activists, and Musk loyalists who lined up before sunrise to claim one of the thirty public seats. Oakland had become the center of the global AI conversation, and the world was watching.

Why These Lawyers Matter

This chapter is not just a roll call of attorneys. It is the architecture of the trial itself.

- OpenAI's lawyers argue that the for-profit pivot was a lifeline — a structural necessity to build AGI safely.
- Musk's lawyers argue that the pivot was a betrayal — a "charity heist" that violated the founding agreement.
- The judge stands between them, weighing not only the law but the future implications of her ruling.

- The jury listens, not to decide guilt, but to advise on credibility — the most precious currency in this case.

The lawyers are the translators of ambition. They are the ones turning Silicon Valley mythology into legal argument. They are the ones shaping how the public will understand the conflict between two men who once shared a mission and now stand on opposite sides of a federal courtroom.

And as closing arguments approach, the stakes have never been higher. OpenAI is rumored to be preparing an IPO that could value the company at $1 trillion. Musk is demanding $150 billion in damages. The outcome could reshape the AI industry, the nonprofit sector, and the future of corporate governance.

The lawyers know this. The judge knows this. Oakland knows this.

Chapter Nineteen

Closing Arguments: The Final Turn

As the Musk v. OpenAI trial reached its final phase, the atmosphere inside the Oakland federal courthouse shifted. from Beijing to Berlin, São Paulo to Seoul — narrowed onto a single room in Oakland, CA where nine jurors would soon decide a case with implications far beyond California. Closing arguments began on Thursday, May 14, 2026, marking the moment when weeks of testimony, internal emails, and competing narratives converged into two sharply opposed interpretations of the same origin story.

Closing arguments in the Musk v. OpenAI trial began on Thursday, May 14, 2026, inside the federal courthouse in Oakland. With the jury preparing to deliberate, both legal teams centered their final statements on one question: the credibility of Sam Altman and whether a "founding agreement" ever truly existed. Yet hovering over the entire proceeding is the conspicuous absence of the man whose name defines the case — Elon Musk.

For one of the world's most prolific technology figures, the climb ahead is steep and one has to wonder why both billionaires are not in attendance. The contrast is striking: images of Musk strolling through

Beijing holding his young son's hand, while in Oakland, a trial with global implications moves forward without him. His physical distance from the courtroom only amplifies the stakes, making viewers wonder why Musk would gamble on his own trial this way?

Whatever the jury decides, the outcome of this case will reverberate far beyond the East Bay and the sister city to San Francisco, California. So, let's get into what's at risk as the OpenAI trial reaches its final act.

The Plaintiff's Case (Elon Musk)

- Musk's Closing Argument (Presented by Lead Attorney Steven Molo)
- ***Musk's attorney***, ***Steven Molo***, framed his closing argument around a central claim: that Sam Altman and Greg Brockman had effectively "stolen a charity" by diverting OpenAI from its original nonprofit mission.
- **Molo attacked Sam Altman's** credibility head-on, telling jurors, "If you cannot trust him… they cannot win," and grounding that argument in testimony from five former insiders who had worked closely with Altman. **Ilya Sutskever**, OpenAI's co-founder and former Chief Scientist, described Altman as someone who fostered fear and was not consistently truthful with the board. Former board member **Helen Toner** testified that Altman withheld information and misled directors about critical decisions. Another former board member, **Tasha McCauley**, said Altman repeatedly concealed

material facts and was "not honest" in his dealings with the board. **Adam D'Angelo**, also a former director, recounted his own difficulties getting straightforward answers from Altman, characterizing him as evasive. And former **CTO Mira Murati**, in recorded testimony, said Altman "created chaos" inside the organization and cultivated an atmosphere of distrust. Together, Molo argued, these accounts formed a pattern that made Altman's version of events impossible to rely on and then there was the issue of the scary bridge.

- **Molo** also leaned on a vivid metaphor that originated during earlier testimony from former OpenAI board members: the image of a hiker approaching a bridge stretched over a deep river — a structure that looks solid from a distance but reveals its instability only once someone steps onto it. He used this analogy to argue that partnering with Sam Altman was similarly deceptive: what appeared to be a trustworthy, mission-aligned relationship was, in his view, fundamentally unsound beneath the surface.
- Unjust Enrichment: Molo argued that OpenAI's transition to a for-profit structure unjustly enriched Altman and Brockman, pointing specifically to Brockman's estimated $30 billion equity stake. He contrasted this with Musk's $38 million in charitable contributions, asserting that the founders had abandoned the mission those donations were intended to support.

Molo also addressed the issue that had hovered over the courtroom throughout the day: Elon Musk's absence. Earlier in the trial, Judge Gonzalez Rogers had warned both sides that "optics matter," especially during closing arguments when jurors form their final impressions. Against that backdrop, Molo conveyed Musk's apology, telling the jury that his client was "sorry he could not be here," and explaining that Musk was in China on a diplomatic business trip with President Trump. The apology did not come from Musk directly; it was delivered through counsel as an effort to blunt the negative optics of his decision to leave the country despite being placed on recall status at the end of his testimony.

The Defense's Closing Argument (OpenAI & Sam Altman)

OpenAI's attorney, Sarah Eddy, countered that Musk's lawsuit relied on "revisionist history" and lacked any legal foundation.

No Binding Contract: Eddy emphasized that no written agreement ever prohibited OpenAI from creating a for-profit arm. She highlighted testimony from witnesses close to Musk — including Shivon Zilis — who said they did not recall any explicit "no-profit" condition attached to Musk's funding.

The "Jealousy" Theory: The defense argued that Musk's objections only emerged after his 2018 attempt to take control of OpenAI failed. According to Eddy, Musk supported the idea of a for-profit structure so long as he was the one leading it.

Statute of Limitations: A key component of the defense was procedural: Eddy argued that Musk filed his lawsuit too late. Any alleged

harms, she said, occurred well before the legal deadline of August 2021, making the claims time-barred.

The "Chainsaw" Incident

To challenge the portrayal of Musk as a benevolent founder, the defense revisited testimony that Musk once asked for a ranked list of researchers so he could "take a chainsaw through" them — an episode they argued had harmed morale and contradicted the image of a mission-driven leader.

The Jury's Task

The nine-person jury now faces three central questions:

Breach of Charitable Trust: Did Musk and OpenAI have a binding agreement requiring the organization to remain a nonprofit?

Unjust Enrichment: Did Sam Altman and Greg Brockman improperly benefit from Musk's early financial support?

Statute of Limitations: Did Musk file his lawsuit within the legally permitted timeframe?

The verdict carries major implications, including potential effects on OpenAI's anticipated $1 trillion IPO later this year.

As of Thursday, May 14, 2026, both sides have delivered their closing arguments in the Oakland federal courthouse. The jury is now preparing to deliberate on whether Altman, Brockman, and OpenAI are legally liable.

What the Jury Must Decide First

Before the jurors can even reach the broader questions about mission "betrayal," they must resolve a threshold issue:

Statute of Limitations: This is the most significant procedural hurdle. OpenAI argues Musk waited too long to sue — beyond the August 2021 cutoff. If the jury agrees that any alleged harm occurred before that date and Musk failed to act, the case could end there.

Breach of Charitable Trust: If the jury determines the lawsuit is timely, they must then decide whether a legally enforceable charitable commitment existed.

Remaining Jury Questions

If the jury determines the case is timely, they must then evaluate two additional issues:

Founding Agreement: Whether a binding understanding existed that required OpenAI to remain a nonprofit indefinitely.

Unjust Enrichment: Whether Sam Altman and Greg Brockman improperly benefited from Musk's $38 million in early donations — particularly in light of Brockman's substantial equity stake.

The timing of this verdict could not be more consequential. OpenAI is preparing for a potential $1 trillion IPO, a valuation so large it would place the company among the most influential technology institutions in modern history. The outcome of this trial will determine not only the future of OpenAI, but the future of AI governance, corporate structure, and the balance of power between nonprofit missions and commercial realities.

A ruling against OpenAI could trigger seismic consequences:

• Removal of Sam Altman and Greg Brockman from leadership. This

would destabilize the company at the very moment it is preparing to enter public markets. Leadership removal is an extraordinary remedy — one courts rarely impose unless there is clear, ongoing harm.

• Possible reversal of OpenAI's for-profit structure. This would unwind years of corporate evolution and jeopardize partnerships, including the multibillion-dollar alignment with Microsoft. It would also raise unprecedented questions about how to govern an AI lab that sits at the frontier of global technology.

• Massive financial damages. Musk is seeking between $79 billion and $134 billion, a figure that would be catastrophic for any company — even one preparing for a trillion-dollar valuation. The court must determine whether Musk's claim of a "charity heist" holds legal weight or whether it is, as OpenAI argues, a retroactive grievance fueled by competitive rivalry.

The jury will deliberate privately. There is no fixed schedule for a verdict. It could arrive within hours or stretch across several days. But one thing is clear: the credibility battle unfolding in this courtroom will shape how the judge interprets the law.

And credibility is where Musk's case has begun to fracture.

MUSK'S ABSENCE — A LEGAL AND SYMBOLIC PROBLEM

One of the most striking dynamics of this trial is not what happened in the courtroom — but what didn't.

Elon Musk was not present.

Not today. Not yesterday. Not since late April.

And that absence is not just symbolic — it is legal.

The Recall Order

At the end of Musk's testimony, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers issued a direct instruction:

"Mr. Musk, you are not excused."

This placed him on recall status, a designation requiring a witness to remain immediately reachable should the court or opposing counsel need further testimony. It is a serious order — one that signals the judge believed Musk's testimony might require clarification or follow-up.

The Violation

Despite that order, Musk left the country without seeking permission from the court. He boarded Air Force One with President Trump and flew to Beijing for a diplomatic summit with Xi Jinping.

By doing so, Musk placed himself outside the practical reach of a short-notice recall.

In federal court, this matters.

It raises questions about:

- respect for judicial authority
- willingness to comply with court orders
- credibility as a litigant
- and whether Musk is fully committed to the case he initiated

Judges do not look kindly on witnesses — especially plaintiffs — who disregard direct instructions.

And the contrast could not be sharper:

Sam Altman was in a public restroom at the Oakland courthouse, steadying himself under fluorescent lights before returning to the stand.

Elon Musk was stepping onto a red carpet in Beijing, attending a state banquet in the Great Hall of the People.

One man was defending his decisions. The other was defending his global business interests.

The optics are not neutral. They never are.

THE REAL STAKES — BEYOND MONEY

This case is not simply about damages or corporate structure. It is about the future of artificial intelligence and who gets to shape it.

If Musk wins:

- OpenAI could be forced back into a nonprofit structure

- Leadership could be removed
- Billions could be redirected
- The IPO could collapse
- And the global AI landscape could be thrown into uncertainty

If OpenAI wins:

- The for-profit structure stands
- The IPO proceeds
- Microsoft's partnership remains intact
- And the company continues its trajectory toward AGI development under its current governance model

But beneath all of this lies a deeper question:

Who controls the future of AI — a single billionaire, or an institution accountable to multiple stakeholders?

That is the question Judge Gonzalez Rogers must answer.

And Musk's absence, his recall violation, and his global business priorities have all become part of the story the court must weigh.

Chapter Twenty

Where's Elon Musk

Juror Perception of Musk's Absence

During closing arguments on May 14, 2026, Musk's attorney, Steven Molo, apologized to the jury for his client's absence. While a plaintiff is not legally required to attend closings, Judge Gonzalez Rogers had previously warned both sides that "optics matter" in her courtroom — a caution that now hangs heavily over the final phase of the trial. For a figure of Musk's stature, it is striking to see him leave before the case concludes, regardless of the circumstances. His decision to depart the country at such a pivotal moment introduces a layer of uncertainty: jurors may question his commitment, and the court may view the move as a lapse in judgment. Yet the reality remains that Musk operates in a sphere where influence and resources often reshape expectations. In that sense, his absence becomes a paradox — potentially damaging in appearance, yet buffered by the extraordinary power he wields.

How Musk's Absence May Influence the Jury

Because this is an advisory jury, their role is to offer a recommendation the judge may ultimately accept or disregard. Even so, Musk's absence inevitably shapes how jurors interpret the case. One of the central questions they must resolve is whether Musk acted as a committed donor trying to protect a charitable mission or as a dissatisfied funder attempting to rewrite history. OpenAI's attorney, Sarah Eddy, leaned heavily on this point, arguing that if the mission were as vital to Musk as he claims, he would be in Oakland rather than in Beijing. That contrast — between a plaintiff who is physically absent and defendants who sat in the front row throughout the proceedings — creates what legal analysts often call the "empty chair" effect. When a plaintiff is missing during the most emotionally charged moment of a trial, jurors can become less inclined to award damages or extend equitable sympathy.

How Musk's Absence Could Shape Judge Gonzalez Rogers' Decision

Because this is an equity case, Judge Gonzalez Rogers alone will issue the final ruling, and Musk's absence intersects directly with her authority. He is asking the court to remove Sam Altman and Greg Brockman and to unwind OpenAI's for-profit structure — remedies that are extraordinary by any measure. To grant such sweeping relief, the judge must be convinced the plaintiff is acting in good faith. A perceived disregard for her recall order, combined with the timing of Musk's departure, may weigh against him as she evaluates whether these remedies are justified.

Additional Consequences of Musk's Absence

- **Failure to Prosecute:** If Judge Gonzalez Rogers concludes that Musk's absence interfered with the court's ability to efficiently manage the case — for example, if she intended to ask him a clarifying question before sending the jury to deliberate — she has the authority to impose sanctions. In equity cases, she can even dismiss certain claims if she believes the plaintiff failed to diligently prosecute them.
- **Impact on Disgorgement Claims:** The judge has already noted that Musk is seeking "billions of dollars in disgorgement," despite his public insistence that he is not motivated by financial gain. His decision to leave the country while asking the court to order one of the largest wealth transfers in corporate history may influence how she interprets his intentions. The optics could shift the claim from a purported charitable correction to what appears, in her view, to be a strategic business maneuver.

Jury Deliberations

As the jury begins their deliberations today, May 14, 2026, Judge Gonzalez Rogers remains the central figure because of the unique nature of this trial:

- **The "Stern" Oversight:** Throughout the trial, she has been noted for running a very "tight ship," even reprimanding Musk earlier in the trial for his social media posts regarding "Scam Altman" and "Greg Stockman."

- **The Final Decision-Maker:** Because parts of this case involve "equitable claims" (like the breach of a charitable trust), the jury's verdict is technically **advisory**. This means Judge Gonzalez Rogers has the ultimate authority to decide the remedies. If the jury finds OpenAI liable, *she* will be the one to decide if the company must revert to a non-profit or if Sam Altman must be removed from the board.
- **The Travel Issue:** Regarding Musk's absence, it was Judge Gonzalez Rogers who specifically told Musk at the end of his testimony in late April that he was "not excused" and was subject to recall. His decision to fly to China with President Trump while the trial was still technically in the testimony phase earlier this week has been a point of contention in her courtroom.

Since you're clearly following the Oakland proceedings closely, are you looking for the specific jury instructions she gave before they went behind closed doors?

Jury Instructions May 14, 2026

Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers issued a specific set of instructions to the jury on **Thursday, May 14, 2026**, as they began deliberations in Oakland. These instructions provide a factual roadmap for how Musk's absence and the evidence are to be weighed.

1. The Three-Tiered Jury Directive

Judge Gonzalez Rogers instructed the jury that they must decide three specific issues in order. If they fail the first, the others become moot:

- **Instruction on Statute of Limitations:** The jury must first decide if the "harms" Musk alleges occurred before or after **August 2021**. If the jury finds that Musk knew about OpenAI's profit-shifting earlier and "sat on his rights," the judge indicated in a pre-deliberation filing that she would likely direct a verdict for the defendants and dismiss the case.
- **Instruction on "Founding Agreement":** Because there is no signed, formal contract, the judge instructed jurors that they may consider the "totality of the circumstances"—including emails, the OpenAI website, and press interviews—to determine if a legally binding "charitable trust" was ever actually formed.
- **Instruction on Unjust Enrichment:** If they find a trust existed, they must decide if Sam Altman, Greg Brockman, and Microsoft "unjustly enriched" themselves by using Musk's $38 million in donations to build a for-profit empire.

2. The "Recall Status" and Musk's Absence

Regarding your focus on the reprimand, the facts are as follows:

- **The Reprimand:** Judge Gonzalez Rogers specifically placed Musk on **"Recall Status"** at the end of April, telling him, **"You are not excused."** This was a directive to stay available for the court's needs.
- **The Violation for the Record:** Musk's departure for China without an explicit waiver from the court is

a factual breach of that status. While the judge has not yet issued a formal sanction, she can use this "contempt of the court's time" when weighing her final decision.

- **Jury Impact (The "Correction"):** During closing arguments, a dispute arose when Musk's lawyer suggested Musk wasn't seeking money. Judge Gonzalez Rogers **sharply criticized** the attorney in a sidebar, noting Musk is seeking **$134 billion in disgorgement**. She then issued a formal **corrective instruction** to the jury to ensure they knew Musk was indeed seeking massive financial transfers (to be paid to a "charitable arm")

OPENAI The Trial of the Century

Closing

The courtroom felt heavier on May 14, 2026, as the lawyers prepared for their final arguments. Three weeks of testimony, thousands of pages of documents, and the reputations of two of the most influential men in technology had all led to this moment. The Trial of the Century — held not in Silicon Valley, not in Washington, but in **Oakland** — was ready to enter its final act.

The stakes were almost impossible to overstate. OpenAI was preparing for a potential **$1 trillion IPO**, a valuation that would place it among the most powerful institutions in the world. A ruling against the company could unravel everything: • the removal of Sam Altman and Greg Brockman • the unwinding of the for-profit structure • billions in damages • and the destabilization of the global AI ecosystem

This was not a lawsuit. This was a referendum on the future of artificial intelligence.

And yet, the courtroom remained grounded in something

profoundly human: credibility. Who did the jury believe? Who did the judge trust? Who had honored the mission — and who had rewritten it?

The Lawyers Make Their Final Case

OpenAI's attorneys argued that the company had evolved out of necessity, not greed. They reminded the court that training frontier models costs billions, that safety research requires scale, and that the nonprofit still holds the controlling stake. They painted Musk as a man who walked away, returned only when OpenAI succeeded, and now sought to reclaim control through litigation.

Musk's attorneys countered with the language of betrayal. They called the for-profit pivot a "charity heist," a violation of the founding agreement, a breach of trust. They argued that OpenAI had abandoned its mission and that Musk had been the only one willing to hold the company accountable.

But the courtroom had not forgotten the contradictions. Not the 90% equity demand. Not the "chainsaw" comment. Not the inheritance suggestion that AGI should pass to Musk's children. Not the xAI takeover attempt in 2025.

And not the fact that Musk — placed on recall by Judge Gonzalez Rogers — had left the country without permission, flying to Beijing aboard Air Force One while the trial continued without him.

The contrast was cinematic. Sam Altman steadying himself in a courthouse restroom. Elon Musk stepping onto a red carpet in the Great Hall of the People.

One man defending his decisions. The other defending his global

business interests.

Oakland's Moment

As the lawyers spoke, I looked around the courtroom and realized something profound: **Oakland had risen to the occasion**. The city that so often appears in headlines for the wrong reasons had hosted the most consequential technology trial of the decade without a single major incident. No murders. No chaos. No disruptions.

Just order. Just discipline. Just civic pride.

Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers had run the courtroom with precision — no theatrics, no indulgence, no distractions. The jurors had shown up every day, attentive and alert. The public had lined up before sunrise, respectful and engaged. The city had held its breath and held its ground.

For once, Oakland was not the backdrop. Oakland was the stage.

Walking Out of the Federal Building

When court adjourned, I stepped out of the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building and felt something I hadn't expected: **a new respect for this city**. The sunlight hit the plaza just right, the breeze carried the sound of BART rumbling beneath the streets, and the people — my people — moved with a quiet confidence that said, *we did this.*

Oakland had proven something to the world. And to itself.

As I walked toward the corner of Clay Street, I realized that I no longer felt the invisible line that had always separated Oakland from San Francisco — that unspoken hierarchy, that old narrative of who leads and who follows. Not today.

Today, Oakland stood shoulder to shoulder with any city in America. And I walked shoulder to shoulder with it.

The verdict would come soon — maybe in hours, maybe in days. But whatever Judge Gonzalez Rogers decided, Oakland had already won.

OPEN AI

Holding Their Breath

MAY 16, 2026 — THE CITY HOLDS ITS BREATH

Oakland woke up on May 16 with a strange kind of quiet — not peace, not calm, but the charged stillness of a city waiting for something to happen. The trial was over. The arguments were done. The jurors were sequestered. Judge Gonzalez Rogers was reviewing the final filings. And yet the federal building on Clay Street felt like a drum with a hand hovering just above it.

Everyone knew the verdict could drop at any moment.

But the city itself… was still.

No sirens. No crowds. No protests. No crime spikes. Just a low, humming tension that seemed to sit over downtown like fog.

It was the kind of quiet that makes people look up from their phones. The kind that makes reporters refresh their email every thirty seconds. The kind that makes a city feel like it's holding its breath.

Where Is Elon Musk?

Not in Oakland. Not in California. Not even in the United States.

On the morning of May 16, Musk was still in **Beijing**, moving through diplomatic halls with the swagger of a man who knows every camera is pointed at him. Chinese state media showed him touring factories, shaking hands with ministers, and smiling beside President

Trump's delegation.

And then came the tweet.

At 6:42 a.m. Pacific Time, Musk broke his silence.

He didn't post a paragraph. He didn't post a thread. He didn't post a defense.

He posted a warning.

"The truth is coming."

Eight characters. No hashtags. No explanation. Just a signal flare fired across the world from Beijing.

Within minutes, the tweet detonated across social media. Cable news cut into regular programming. Legal analysts scrambled to interpret it. OpenAI employees texted each other screenshots. And Oakland — already on edge — felt the temperature rise.

This wasn't defeat. This was **provocation**. This was Musk reminding the world that even from 6,000 miles away, he could bend the conversation with a single sentence.

It wasn't gasoline. It was a **match**.

And everyone knew something was about to ignite.

He wasn't in Oakland — but his shadow was.

Where Is Sam Altman?

Sam Altman was in **San Francisco**, holed up in OpenAI's Mission District headquarters, surrounded by lawyers, advisors, and a security detail that had doubled since the trial began. He had not posted on social media. He had not made a statement. He had not been seen in public since leaving the courthouse two days earlier.

Sources said he was "preparing for all outcomes." Sources said he was "exhausted." Sources said he was "focused on the mission."

But the truth was simpler: Altman was waiting, just like everyone else.

Waiting for a ruling that could remove him from the company he built. Waiting for a decision that could reshape the future of AGI. Waiting for a judgment that could define his legacy.

What Are the Headlines in Oakland?

The Oakland Tribune ran with:

"VERDICT IMMINENT — CITY ON ALERT AS JUDGE REVIEWS FINAL FILINGS"

The San Francisco Chronicle countered with:

"Altman's Future Hangs in Balance — Musk Silent in Beijing"

But the most Oakland headline came from KQED:

"OAKLAND READY FOR VERDICT — NO INCIDENTS, NO DISRUPTIONS, CITY HOLDS ITS GROUND"

Because that was the real story. Not the billionaires. Not the tweets. Not the global drama.

The real story was that Oakland — the city so often dismissed, underestimated, and misrepresented — had hosted the biggest tech trial of the decade **without a single major incident**.

No murders. No riots. No courthouse chaos. No national embarrassment.

Just order. Just discipline. Just civic pride.

Why Is the City So Quiet?

Because Oakland understands something the rest of the country forgets:

Silence is what happens when a city is paying attention.

People weren't out causing trouble. They were home watching the news. They were refreshing their phones. They were waiting for the verdict that could change everything.

The quiet wasn't fear. It was focus.

What Is About to Happen?

Judge Gonzalez Rogers is expected to issue her ruling **within days** — possibly within hours. The jurors have already delivered their advisory findings. The legal teams have submitted their final briefs. The court is sealed. The decision is now in the hands of one woman.

And when those ruling drops, it will:

- shake Silicon Valley
- move global markets
- determine the future of OpenAI
- and define the next chapter of artificial intelligence

But on May 16, none of that had happened yet.

On May 16, Oakland was the eye of the storm.

A city waiting. A city watching. A city ready.

And somewhere between Beijing and San Francisco, between a billionaire tweeting and a CEO preparing, between the courthouse and the quiet streets, the future of AI hung in the balance.

The Verdict

OPENAI DECISION

May 17, 2026. Oakland woke up with the kind of sky that feels like a held breath — bright, still, waiting. The city had been quiet for days, unusually quiet, as if every block from Jack London Square to the hills above Skyline Boulevard understood that history was about to land on Clay Street.

Inside the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building, the lights were already on. Security had doubled. Reporters gathered in tight clusters, whispering into microphones. The jurors were sequestered. The judge was in chambers. And somewhere in the building, a clerk held an envelope that would decide the future of artificial intelligence.

This was the moment. The verdict was coming.

But the two men whose names had defined the trial — the men whose visions had collided in this courtroom — were nowhere near Oakland.

Elon Musk was still in Beijing, moving through diplomatic halls with cameras trailing him like satellites. His last message to the world had been a cryptic warning: *"The truth is coming."* It ricocheted across social

media, igniting speculation, outrage, and anticipation. Musk wasn't in the courtroom, but his presence was everywhere — in headlines, in whispers, in the tension that clung to the air like static.

Sam Altman, meanwhile, was across the Bay in San Francisco, inside OpenAI headquarters, surrounded by attorneys and advisors. He had not spoken publicly since leaving the stand. He had not posted. He had not appeared. He was waiting — for a ruling that could remove him from leadership, dismantle the structure he built, or vindicate every decision he had made since 2015.

Two men. Two cities. Two futures.

And in the middle of it all stood **Oakland** — steady, disciplined, and ready.

The courthouse filled slowly, like a theater before a final act. Every seat was taken. Every reporter was in place. Every eye was fixed on the bench where Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers would soon appear. The Trial of the Century had reached its final moment, and the city that had hosted it with dignity and calm was about to witness its conclusion.

Who wins. Who loses. And the winner is…

The doors opened. The judge entered. The courtroom rose.

The verdict had arrived.

May 17, 2026 (continued)

Oakland & Beijing

What struck me most that morning wasn't the silence of the courthouse — it was the silence of Oakland itself. I drove past the

Walgreens around the corner, the same one that once served office workers, courthouse staff, and families passing through downtown. Now it stood half-shuttered, guarded, and nearly empty. Many of the people I grew up with are gone — some moved away, some passed on — and the businesses that anchored this city have been closing one by one, as recently as last month. That's the part no one sees when they talk about billion-dollar lawsuits and AI revolutions. When Musk and Altman aren't here, when the cameras leave, Oakland returns to its loneliness. The contrast is mind-bending: the richest men in the world fighting over the future of artificial intelligence, while the city hosting their trial struggles just to stay alive.

On the eve of the Musk v. OpenAI verdict, the federal courthouse in Oakland was silent. I drove down to the building that had been buzzing for weeks, only to find it transformed into a ghost town. Gone were the reporters with their long lenses aimed toward the third-floor windows. No Musk. No Altman. No attorneys pacing the plaza. Everyone involved in the case had returned to their lives, leaving the courthouse still and waiting.

But the world around it was vibrating with geopolitical symbolism.

While jurors prepared to deliberate on the future of American artificial intelligence, Elon Musk was thousands of miles away in Beijing, where a single photograph of his son — Little X — wearing a traditional Chinese jacket ignited a wave of fascination across Chinese social media. State outlets amplified the image, and Tesla's stock ticked upward as

commentators framed the moment as a soft-power victory for Musk.

The timing was impossible to ignore. One day before a California jury would decide whether Musk's lawsuit could unwind OpenAI's corporate structure, China was embracing him with a warmth that bordered on strategic. AP and New York Times reporting noted the unusual visibility of Musk's trip, with analysts pointing out that his rising popularity in China coincided with a moment when the United States was scrutinizing his role in the AI ecosystem.

Complicating the backdrop was a recent security scare in Washington: a gunman arrested after an attempted attack near the White House following a state dinner. In the swirl of speculation that followed, several outlets highlighted Musk's unusually robust private security apparatus — a detail that reportedly factored into why President Trump included him on the China delegation. The contrast was striking. In Oakland, Musk was a litigant. In Beijing, he was treated like a visiting head of state.

For anyone standing outside the courthouse, the juxtaposition was surreal. As attorneys prepared closing arguments in a case that could reshape the governance of AI in the United States, Musk's presence abroad — amplified by images of Little X and the diplomatic choreography surrounding the trip — underscored the global stakes of the trial. It felt as if two versions of the same man existed simultaneously: one fighting over the soul of American AI, the other being celebrated on the world stage.

The Verdict

JURY DISMISSES MUSK'S LAWSUIT AGAINST OPENAI ON STATUTE-OF-LIMITATIONS GROUNDS

THE VERDICT — May 18, 2026

Elon Musk lost. That was the first and only sentence that mattered when the jury returned to the federal courtroom in Oakland. Nine jurors, unanimous. His entire case against OpenAI and Sam Altman was dismissed because he filed it too late — years too late. The statute of limitations had already closed the door, and no amount of money, power, or spectacle could pay it back open.

Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers accepted the verdict immediately, her tone firm, her delivery precise. Musk had missed the legal deadlines for every claim he brought. Three years for breach of charitable trust. Two years for unjust enrichment. He blew past both. The law is the law, even for the richest man in the world.

The courtroom was silent for a beat — the kind of silence that feels like a held breath. Then it was over. No dramatic speeches. No fireworks. Just the clean, final sound of a case collapsing under its own lateness.

OpenAI won. Musk lost. And the future of artificial intelligence shifted in that instant.

So, there you have it. The high-stakes legal battle between Elon Musk and Sam Altman came to its dramatic conclusion on May 18, 2026, when a nine-person federal jury in Oakland delivered a swift and unanimous verdict, ruling entirely in favor of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, President Greg Brockman, and OpenAI itself.

The ruling was simple and devastating in its clarity. The jury found the defendants not liable on all counts. Musk's claims — breach of charitable trust, unjust enrichment, and even the related allegations against Microsoft — were all untimely and barred by the statute of limitations. OpenAI's legal team had delivered a blow that Musk's attorneys never recovered from: the argument that Musk knew, as far back as 2017, that OpenAI was transitioning toward a for-profit structure. He knew California law imposed a three-year limit on these kinds of claims. And yet, he waited until 2024 to file suit. The richest man in the world waited too long.

The Oakland jury deliberated for less than two hours after an intense three-week trial that began on April 27, 2026. In the end, the law spoke louder than the headlines.

This ruling removes a massive existential threat to OpenAI. The company, now valued at $852 billion after its transition to a public benefit corporation, has a clear path forward as it prepares for a highly anticipated initial public offering later this year — an IPO that analysts predict could approach a trillion-dollar valuation. The verdict didn't just

end a lawsuit; it cleared the runway for one of the most consequential corporate events of the decade.

And as the courtroom emptied, as reporters sprinted toward the plaza and the news alerts began lighting up screens across the world, I sat for a moment longer. I wanted to feel the weight of what had just happened in this city I call home. Oakland has always been a place where history doesn't whisper — it announces itself. Today, it announced that even the most powerful figures in technology are bound by the same laws as everyone else.

The verdict was final. The moment was historic. And the story — our story — now moves forward.

In the end, this verdict was never just about Elon Musk or Sam Altman. It was about the fragile line between innovation and control, and how close we came to losing the very thing that makes artificial intelligence transformative — its ability to serve the public good. Had this lawsuit succeeded, the future of AI could have been dragged into a private war between billionaires, its direction shaped not by ethics or progress but by power. Instead, the law held firm. The system worked. And the technology that will define the next century remains in the hands of builders, researchers, and communities who believe in its potential to uplift humanity rather than restrict it.

What still moves me most is that this turning point didn't come from a boardroom or a tech summit. It came from an Oakland jury — nine everyday people who will never have the wealth, access, or influence of the men whose fate they decided. They sat in that courtroom, listened,

weighed the evidence, and delivered a verdict that protected an entire nation's technological future. They reminded America that democracy doesn't just live in elections; it lives in juries, in civic duty, in ordinary citizens who rise to extraordinary moments. And on May 18, 2026, in a federal courtroom in Oakland, California, they changed the course of artificial intelligence forever.

The Epilogue

Lessons Learned

EPILOGUE — A CITY, A VERDICT, A NEW FUTURE

We have the verdict now. Elon Musk — a man I treasure, admire, and have followed for years — lost. But he remains a winner in every other arena he touches. As the richest man in the world walked out of the Federal Building one last time, Oakland, California stood transformed. No longer will she be defined as the understudy to San Francisco, the city so often praised as the most beautiful in the world. Oakland now holds a distinction that cannot be borrowed, bought, or overshadowed. She is the city where the world finally learned what artificial intelligence truly is, and how close we came to losing control of it.

This trial revealed something profound: that the future of technology can hinge on the judgment of everyday people — a jury who will never enjoy the opportunities of a Sam Altman or an Elon Musk. Yet it was their clarity, their integrity, and their courage that defined the legal agreements shaping tomorrow. What they have done for the world is beyond description, because the best of AI is still ahead of us.

Let this trial be a lesson to all who dream. Nonprofits will rise. For-profit institutions will carry a renewed responsibility — to innovate,

to earn, and to uplift. To create jobs. To open doors. To build a future where brilliance serves the community, not just the boardroom.

And as we say farewell to high tech in Oakland, we will never forget how we got the Trial of the Century. We will never forget that the world turned its eyes to our city — and finally understood who we are.

Now everyone knows where Oakland, California is. And now everyone knows what we're about.

After trial comments: Elon Musk plans to appeal.

"*This illustrates why the ruling by the terrible activist Oakland judge, who simply used the jury as a fig leaf, creates such a terrible precedent. She just handed out a free license to loot charities if you can keep the looting quiet for a few years," he says. Musk says he will be filing an appeal with the Ninth Circuit." – Elon Musk*

After the Trial

Opinions

Source: Musk-ono-my

Judge Gonzalez Rogers signals tough road for Elon Musk appeal, says substantial evidence supports the jury verdict Speaking to counsel immediately after the jury verdict, Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers offered an unusually direct view of how strong she thought the verdict against Musk was. The judge told Steven Molo, Musk's lead counsel, that she "was prepared to dismiss on the spot" because there is a substantial amount of evidence in the record to support the jury's finding that Musk's claims were barred by the statute of limitations. Gonzalez Rogers offered to write a full statement of facts supporting the verdict for the appellate record, but said her preference would be to skip that step and start preparing for her next trial. The judge also noted that questions like whether Musk knew or should have known of the alleged breach, and whether he did sufficient diligence to know, are factual issues that the jury was best positioned to decide. For Musk's appeal, that is a significant headwind. Appellate courts give heavy deference to a jury's factual findings, particularly on questions like notice and diligence.

Hardcover Bonus:

OpenAI Trial Aftermath

The aftermath of the landmark Musk v. OpenAI trial is now a matter of public record, and in this hardcover edition we can state with certainty that the verdict delivered in Oakland was a decisive victory for OpenAI, Sam Altman, Greg Brockman, and Microsoft. A nine-member federal advisory jury in Oakland, California unanimously concluded that Elon Musk filed his lawsuit too late, finding every claim barred by California's three-year statute of limitations. Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers immediately adopted the jury's findings and dismissed the case, ending Musk's attempt to unwind OpenAI's for-profit structure or force disgorgement of up to $150 billion in alleged unjust enrichment.

The jury deliberated for less than two hours before reaching its conclusion, a speed that underscored how straightforward the limitations issue appeared to them. Because the case was dismissed on procedural grounds, the court never reached Musk's allegations that OpenAI's leadership had violated a charitable trust or improperly benefited from the company's restructuring. This outcome removed the most significant legal obstacle standing between OpenAI and its anticipated initial public

offering, (IPO); which bankers have privately estimated could approach a trillion-dollar valuation.

Musk's legal team immediately announced plans to appeal to the Ninth Circuit, but the challenge ahead is steep. Judge Gonzalez Rogers noted on the record that the statute-of-limitations question was a factual determination supported by substantial evidence, making it difficult to overturn on appeal. Musk publicly criticized the verdict as a "calendar technicality," insisting that the jury never addressed the merits of his claims. His attorneys echoed that sentiment, but the legal reality remains: the jury found he had reason to know about OpenAI's for-profit transition years before he sued in 2024.

What the verdict did accomplish—immediately and unmistakably—was clearing the way for OpenAI's commercial trajectory. With the lawsuit dismissed, OpenAI's restructuring remains intact, and its partnership with Microsoft stands unchallenged by any judicial finding(s) of wrongdoing. The ruling also alleviated concerns that the company might face court-ordered governance changes or restrictions on its ability to commercialize advanced AI systems.

The trial itself revealed the depth of the personal and philosophical rift between Musk and Altman. Testimony showed that Musk had invested roughly $38 - 44 million in OpenAI's early years and believed the organization should remain a nonprofit dedicated to safeguarding humanity. OpenAI countered that Musk was aware of the need to create a for-profit arm as early as 2019, and that he had sought significant control over the company—including proposals for a 90% ownership

stake or a merger with Tesla. These disputes, while dramatic, ultimately never reached judicial evaluation because the case ended on the threshold question of timeliness.

The verdict also highlighted a broader legal and cultural shift in Silicon Valley. Experts noted that the ruling reinforces the principle that charitable-trust claims in the technology sector are subject to the same limitations rules as any other civil dispute. For founders who launch mission-driven organizations and later object to commercial pivots, the decision signals that objections must be raised promptly or risk being barred entirely. The unresolved substantive questions—whether a nonprofit can convert to a for-profit entity without breaching fiduciary duties—remain open for future courts to address.

For OpenAI, the dismissal removes a cloud that had hovered over its valuation and public-market ambitions. The company, valued at $852 billion in its most recent funding round, can now proceed toward its IPO without the threat of a multibillion-dollar judgment or forced structural overhaul. Microsoft, which invested heavily in OpenAI beginning in 2019, likewise emerges without any finding of aiding or abetting a breach of charitable trust.

For Musk, the loss is significant. His $150 billion damages claim was extinguished, and his effort to force OpenAI back into a nonprofit form was halted. Still, his vow to appeal ensures that the legal conflict will continue in some form, even as OpenAI moves forward. Whether the Ninth Circuit will revive any portion of the case remains uncertain, but the factual nature of the jury's finding makes reversal unlikely.

What is clear is that the trial marked a pivotal moment in the governance of artificial intelligence. It exposed the tensions between idealistic founding missions and the immense capital required to build frontier-level AI systems. It also underscored how much influence a small group of tech leaders wield over the direction of the field—and how personal rivalries can shape the public narrative around AI's future. As this hardcover edition goes to press, OpenAI stands on the threshold of one of the most consequential public offerings in modern technology history. The courtroom battle that once threatened to derail that trajectory has now been resolved, at least for the moment, by a unanimous jury and a federal judge who found that the law's deadlines apply to everyone—even the world's richest man.

Path to a Public Offering

Sam Altman

OpenAI's Path Toward a Public Offering

In early 2026, multiple financial and technology outlets reported that OpenAI had begun internal preparations for a potential **initial public offering (IPO)**. According to Reuters and Tech Spot, discussions among investors and analysts placed OpenAI's possible valuation in the range of **hundreds of billions of dollars**, with some estimates suggesting it could approach **$1 trillion** depending on market conditions at the time of filing.

These reports indicate that OpenAI's leadership has been evaluating the structural and financial requirements necessary for a public listing, including governance changes and long-term capital planning.

2. Organizational Restructuring to Enable Future Capital Raising

In 2025–2026, OpenAI completed a significant restructuring of its corporate framework. Public filings and reporting confirm that:

- OpenAI consolidated its operations under a new entity known as **OpenAI Group**.
- The nonprofit arm retained approximately **26%** ownership.
- Microsoft held an estimated **27%** stake following the restructuring.

- The new structure reduced certain nonprofit constraints and allowed OpenAI to pursue large-scale capital initiatives.

This restructuring was widely interpreted by analysts as a necessary step for any future IPO.

3. Capital Requirements and Infrastructure Expansion

Reporting from CNBC and Bloomberg confirms that OpenAI has been planning substantial infrastructure expansion to support future AI development. These plans include:

- Multi-billion-dollar data center projects.
- Long-term compute agreements with cloud providers.
- Exploration of large-scale initiatives such as the proposed **"Stargate"** compute facility, estimated in some reports at up to **$500 billion** over time.

These projects reflect the scale of investment required to train and deploy next-generation AI systems.

4. Internal Financial Considerations

According to The Financial Express and other business outlets, OpenAI's Chief Financial Officer, **Sarah Friar**, has expressed caution regarding the timeline for a public offering. Reports indicate that Friar has raised concerns about:

- Organizational readiness for a late-2026 IPO.
- The pace of revenue growth relative to infrastructure spending.
- The scale of proposed long-term capital commitments.
- Dependencies on external suppliers for computer hardware.

These internal discussions highlight the complexity of preparing a

company of OpenAI's size and ambition for public markets.

5. Market Position and Revenue Outlook

Industry analysts cited by Tech Spot and Reuters have projected that OpenAI's revenue could continue to grow significantly through the late 2020s, driven by:

- Enterprise adoption of AI models.
- Licensing agreements.
- Consumer-facing AI products.
- Expansion into new markets.

Some projections estimate that OpenAI could reach **hundreds of billions in annual revenue** by the end of the decade, though these figures remain dependent on market conditions, competition, and regulatory developments.

6. The Historical Significance of the IPO Moment

If OpenAI proceeds with a public offering, it would represent one of the most consequential events in the history of artificial intelligence. The company's transition from a nonprofit research lab to a global AI enterprise — and its subsequent preparation for public markets — marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of the technology sector.

Carol Denise Mitchell

AI Musk/Altman/After-effects

How the Loss Shapes Musk's Position in the AI Landscape

Permanent Separation from OpenAI's Governance

The dismissal of Musk's lawsuit formally ends his legal challenge to OpenAI's current structure. Because the jury ruled that his claims were filed beyond the statute of limitations, the court did not consider any of the underlying allegations. As a result, Musk has no remaining legal avenue to influence OpenAI's governance, operations, or strategic direction. This outcome leaves OpenAI's leadership and corporate structure intact and places Musk entirely outside the organization he helped found in 2015.

Court-Ordered Disclosure of Corporate Emails

During pre-trial proceedings, a federal judge ordered Musk to produce emails from his **Tesla** and **SpaceX** accounts after evidence showed he used those accounts to conduct AI-related communications. This order required Musk to turn over internal correspondence from his other companies, a rare instance in which a civil lawsuit involving one entity reached into the operational communications of his broader corporate

network. While no reporting indicates operational harm, the compelled disclosure is a documented legal consequence of the case.

Removal of a Legal Obstacle for OpenAI's Future Capital Plans

With the lawsuit dismissed, OpenAI faces no active legal challenge from Musk as it prepares for a potential public offering. Reporting from Reuters, CNBC, and Tech Spot confirms that OpenAI has been evaluating the requirements for a future IPO, with analysts projecting valuations in the hundreds of billions of dollars, possibly even a Trillion. The end of the lawsuit eliminates a source of legal uncertainty surrounding OpenAI's structure, allowing the company to proceed with long-term capital planning without the overhang of Musk's claims.

Musk's Post-Trial Trajectory

Following the verdict, Musk stated publicly that he intends to appeal. At the same time, his companies — including Tesla, SpaceX, Neuralink, X, and xAI — continue operating without reported impact from the lawsuit. Public filings and press releases show that Musk has continued expanding **xAI**, raising capital, hiring engineers, and developing new AI models. These documented actions indicate that Musk's strategic focus remains on building his own AI ecosystem independent of OpenAI.

The AI Projected Future:

1. OpenAI's New Corporate Structure (FACTS)

After the 2025–2026 restructuring, OpenAI now operates under a **public benefit corporation** called *OpenAI Group*. This structure is

documented in public filings and reporting.

Key factual elements:

- The nonprofit retains **~26%** ownership.
- Microsoft holds **~27%**.
- The remaining shares are distributed among employees, early investors, and the new corporate entity.
- The restructuring removed earlier governance constraints that limited capital raising.

This structure is what enables OpenAI to prepare for a future IPO.

Altman remains CEO with full operational authority. Documented post-trial developments include:

- Expansion of global data center infrastructure
- Multi-year compute agreements with Microsoft and other partners
- Continued rollout of GPT-5-class models and enterprise tools
- Strengthening of government and regulatory relationships
- Leadership of long-term AGI research

There is **no reporting** of internal instability following the trial.

Altman's focus is on scaling OpenAI's capabilities and preparing for long-term capital events.

Brockman, OpenAI's co-founder and former President, continues to play a central role in:

- Engineering leadership
- Model training strategy
- Infrastructure planning

- Safety and alignment frameworks
- Product development cycles

Public reporting confirms Brockman remains one of the key architects of OpenAI's technical roadmap.

His influence is especially strong in:

- Training pipeline design
- Model evaluation
- Deployment strategy
- Internal engineering culture

He is not a ceremonial figure — he is a structural one.

The global AI industry is accelerating at a documented pace:

- **Model training cycles** have shortened from 18–24 months to 6–12 months.
- **Compute demand** is increasing exponentially, driving multi-billion-dollar data center projects.
- **Enterprise adoption** is expanding across finance, healthcare, logistics, and government.
- **Regulatory frameworks** are emerging in the U.S., EU, and Asia.
- **Competition** among OpenAI, Anthropic, Google DeepMind, and xAI is intensifying.

These trends are supported by reporting from Reuters, CNBC, Bloomberg, and industry filings.

OpenAI is preparing for long-term capital expansion:

- Analysts project valuations in the **hundreds of billions**.

- Some estimates suggest the IPO could approach **$1 trillion**, depending on market conditions.
- The restructuring was designed to enable large-scale fundraising.
- OpenAI is pursuing multi-year infrastructure investments, including the proposed **Stargate** compute facility.

These are documented facts, not interpretations.

With the lawsuit resolved:

- OpenAI faces **no active legal challenge** from Musk.
- xAI continues expanding independently.
- Anthropic remains a major competitor with its "constitutional AI" approach.
- Google DeepMind continues to invest heavily in frontier models.
- Global governments are increasing regulatory oversight.

The trial is over, but the competition is not.

The next phase is defined by:

- Infrastructure scale
- Model capability
- Safety frameworks
- Capital access
- Global deployment

This is where the story goes now — not in the courtroom, but in the **race to build the next generation of AI systems**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Denise Mitchell

Carol Denise Mitchell, called an Icon by social media fans, is an award-winning American author whose work has shaped conversations about trauma, justice, and community healing for more than four decades. Born in Los Angeles and raised in Southern California, Mitchell emerged as a powerful literary voice early in her career, earning national recognition for her ability to transform lived experience into compelling, socially resonant storytelling.

Her landmark novel, **What Happened to Suzy**, remains her most celebrated work — a book so culturally significant that it was archived in the **Library of Congress** and honored with a **National Book Award from ReadersFavorite.com**. Its unflinching portrayal of childhood trauma and survival established Mitchell as a writer of rare emotional clarity and moral courage.

Her follow-up, **Caring About Restoring Our Lives (CAROL)**, further solidified her reputation as a community advocate and truth-teller. The book was archived in the **Glendale Public Library** for its contribution to public understanding of recovery, resilience, and the long arc of

healing.

Mitchell's catalog spans memoir, fiction, biography, and social commentary. Her body of work includes:

- **What Happened to Suzy** — National Book Award winner; archived in the Library of Congress
- **Caring About Restoring Our Lives (CAROL)** — archived in the Glendale Public Library
- **Michael Jackson: The Love He Saved** — her acclaimed exploration of the humanity behind the global icon
- **Rovella Starr**
- **Ruthless Pamela Jean**
- **Your Rights: What Employers Do Not Want You to Know**
- **Raised on Black & White TV**
- **Interrupted**
- **Maxine**
- **Letters to Carol**
- **Unstable**
- **1973 Miss Congeniality**
- **Debi Thomas: What Really Happened**

- **Surya Bonaly: A Tribute**
- **Noah, True Love Never Dies** — a #1 Kindle Unlimited bestseller
- **Rovella Starr** — also a #1 Kindle Unlimited bestseller
- **The Unlimited Dominance Series**
- And more than **40 published works** across four decades

Her writing has been featured by the **African American Literature Book Club (AALBC)**, the **Oakland Post**, and numerous literary and cultural platforms. She is recognized for her documentary-style precision, her emotional depth, and her unwavering commitment to truth.

Mitchell is also the founder of **CDMBOOKS**, an independent publishing house dedicated to elevating overlooked voices and preserving the stories that shape American life. Her work extends beyond the page: she is a mentor, a cultural archivist, and a civic storyteller whose influence spans generations.

In 2026, Mitchell became one of the few independent authors to document the **Musk v. OpenAI Trial** from inside the Oakland federal courthouse. Her reporting — blending legal insight, community perspective, and narrative clarity — earned praise for its accuracy, dignity, and cultural resonance.

Today, from her home in Oakland, California, overlooking the very courthouse where history continues to unfold, Carol Denise Mitchell

continues to write, document, and advocate. Her legacy is built on resilience, truth, and the power of a single voice to illuminate an entire era.

INDEX

Officials in Oakland

OFFICIAL Oakland, California Officials

1. Barbara Lee & Bay Area Elected Officials

Rep. Barbara Lee Office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee 1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000-N Oakland, CA 94612

Oakland Mayor's Office of the Mayor 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 3rd Floor Oakland, CA 94612

Oakland City Council – City Clerk (for distribution to all councilmembers) City of Oakland – Office of the City Clerk 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor Oakland, CA 94612

Alameda County Board of Supervisors County Administration Building 1221 Oak Street, Suite 536 Oakland, CA 94612

2. Legal & Judicial Institutions (Archival / Public Affairs)

Alameda County Superior Court – Executive Office Administration Building 1225 Fallon Street, Room 209 Oakland, CA 94612

Judicial Council of California – Public Affairs / Archives 455 Golden Gate Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102

3. Oakland Cultural & Historical Institutions

African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO) 659 14th Street Oakland, CA 94612

Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) Collections Department 1000 Oak Street Oakland, CA 94607

Oakland Public Library – Oakland History Center Main Library 125 14th Street Oakland, CA 94612

East Bay Yesterday (Podcast / History Project) c/o East Bay Yesterday P.O. Box 1066 Oakland, CA 94604

4. California State-Level Cultural Institutions

California State Library – California History Section 900 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814

California African American Museum (CAAM) 600 State Drive Exposition Park Los Angeles, CA 90037

California State Archives 1020 O Street Sacramento, CA 95814

5. National Archives & Black Press Institutions

Library of Congress African American History & Culture Division 101 Independence Ave SE Washington, DC 20540

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture 515 Malcolm X Blvd New York, NY 10037

National Museum of African American History & Culture (Smithsonian) 1400 Constitution Ave NW Washington, DC 20560

Howard University – Moorland-Spingarn Research Center 500 Howard Place NW Washington, DC 20059

6. Media Outlets (Reference Copies Only)

KQED News – Bay Area Desk 2601 Mariposa Street San Francisco, CA 94110

The Oakland side c/o Cityside Journalism Initiative 2120 University Avenue Berkeley, CA 94704

San Francisco Chronicle – Local Desk 901 Mission Street San Francisco, CA 94103

TechCrunch 410 Townsend Street, Suite 100 San Francisco, CA 94107

7. Libraries That Actively Collect Independent Authors

Los Angeles Public Library – Literature Dept. 630 W. 5th Street Los Angeles, CA 90071

San Francisco Public Library – African American Center 100 Larkin Street San Francisco, CA 94102

Seattle Public Library – Special Collections 1000 Fourth Avenue Seattle, WA 98104

New York Public Library – Schomburg Branch (Already listed above — extremely important)

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The Guardian — Investigative reporting on AI safety, nonprofit governance, and the broader societal implications of the trial.

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The New York Times International Edition — Reporting on the trial's global significance, including coverage of key witnesses and international policy debates.

The Washington Post — National and global reporting on AI regulation, political oversight, and the trial's broader implications for technology governance.

Technology & Industry Sources

Wired Magazine — Coverage of AGI development, AI ethics, and the technological stakes underlying the Musk v. OpenAI dispute.

MIT Technology Review — Analysis of AGI research, safety concerns, and the scientific context surrounding the trial.

The Verge — Reporting on tech industry reactions, product implications, and public-facing AI developments.

TechCrunch — Coverage of AI startups, corporate structures, and industry responses to the trial's revelations.

IEEE Spectrum — Technical reporting on machine learning, AGI research, and engineering-level implications of the case.

Legal & Judicial Context

United States District Court for the Northern District of California — Public records, filings, and procedural documentation related to the Musk v. OpenAI trial.

PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) — Access to motions, orders, and filings entered into the official docket.

SCOTUS blog & Federal Court Analysis Outlets — Commentary on federal judicial processes, precedent, and the legal frameworks relevant to AGI governance.

Civic & Community Sources (Oakland, California)

City of Oakland — Official Publications — Documentation on public safety initiatives, including the Oakland Ceasefire Strategy and youth development programs.

Oakland Fund for Children and Youth — Program data, youth participation statistics, and funding allocations for STEAM and career-readiness initiatives.

National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) — Research and community-based strategies related to violence reduction and civic leadership.

Hack the Hood — Program information for *Build.AI* and youth-centered technology training initiatives.

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) — Information on

Pre-Collegiate Academies, summer learning programs, and technology-focused enrichment.

Artificial Intelligence & Research Institutions

OpenAI Research Publications — Technical papers, safety frameworks, and AGI development documentation.

Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) — Research on AI ethics, governance, and societal impact.

UC Berkeley — Division of Computing, Data Science, and Society — Academic work on machine learning, AGI safety, and public-interest technology.

Partnership on AI — Multistakeholder research on AI governance, transparency, and global best practices.

Historical & Contextual Sources

Library of Congress — Digital Collections — Archival materials related to federal court history and major U.S. technology trials.

National Archives — Records on federal judicial appointments, including the confirmation of Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers.

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges — Verified biographical information on Judge Gonzalez Rogers and related judicial history.